

# Old Californian days. By James Steele

OLD

CALIFORNIAN DAYS

JAMES STEELE.

BELFORD-CLARKE CO

CHICAGO

MISSION GARDEN, SANTA BARBARA. *FRONTISPIECE.*

OLD

CALIFORNIAN DAYS

JAMES STEELE

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1889.

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## CHAPTER I. THE BRIEF STORY.

EVERY land has its story; a story in the telling of which there are two distinct methods. One way includes only the question of what are called “resources”; the things that are present today, and will increase or decline tomorrow, and which interest the average American accordingly. The other is misty, intangible, historical, a hovering phantom whose presence is not visible, but which is nevertheless always there, an abiding legacy to whoever shall come, an influence not to be avoided, a mist such as that with which time has dimmed the colors of an old painting; not intended, but something which to all beholders belongs to the picture.

This story may be divided into periods, of which, in respect to California, there are manifestly three. First, there is the old time of the Missions, part of the scheme of Spanish conquest, imparting a certain coloring which nothing more practical and modern will ever entirely wash out. Second, the American romance of the Argonauts; a romance not any more 10 intended than the first, but one of the most thrilling in history, producing a new development of the myriad Saxon character as evolved on this continent. It is only forty years old. Men are living who took part in it. Yet it has gone into history as a distinct romance, scarcely considered in any other light, but illy to be spared from the story of American progress, or the pages of that unpractical but indispensable literature which time builds, which every nation owns, and which in time comes to be considered a legacy and possession as sacred as the monuments that commemorate any species of human glory. The third period must of necessity be described by a word which culture condemns and refinement refuses to recognize. It comprises the time at which the American re-discovered the climatic secret of the Spaniard. It is the period of the “Boom.”

The time has not come for any description of this last, though its remarkable results are seen on every hand. The time must come when an attempt will be made to formulate into some degree of compactness and tangibility the dead-and-gone sensations of the people whose singular experience it was to witness with their very eyes all the processes of the making of an empire: an Oriental empire, that grew like the exhalations of a night; by the rubbing of a lamp; by an incantation; full

of miracles; substantial, yet covered with mystery and clothed upon with a garment not heretofore worn by any form of American life. It is a period when the most brilliant exploits of financiering, the wildest dreams of speculation, the most extravagant pretensions, the most striking forms of assertion, are covered by an accomplishment heretofore marked only by the lapse of painful years; by a visible achievement heretofore only known in the passage of centuries. The sunshine covers it all with a yellow glory. The winterless year wreathes it with garlands. It might be a corner of Algiers. On its coast invisible spirits sing, "come unto these yellow sands." Nature has made it the domain of the always afternoon; enterprise and race have turned it into a hive whose hum is ceaseless. Blue mountains fence the horizon, and its valleys smile in a kind of Biblical peace whose restfulness does not touch the modern soul. The home of the cypress and myrtle, its very air that of the old lands where in all ages the human soul has dreamed, there are yet neither garlands nor dreams.

The first of these periods can only be recalled by bringing together the shreds and ravelings of a history which covers several centuries, yet the mementoes of it dot the Californian landscape as strangely as though old Spain had been awakened with a new population amid her orange-groves and gray walls; with new water in her mossy sluices; with a new language and a strange religion. Thoroughly in keeping with the landscape, but strangely at variance with all artificial surroundings, the crumbling towers of these ancient temples keep one all the time wondering if this be any lawful portion of the great American inheritance, and perhaps one sometimes wishes them entirely out of the way. Daily the incongruity between the then and the now becomes more striking, and daily the crumbling walls remind more strongly of a modern usurpation of what was meant for other uses. So long as they shall stand there is a feeling that it is not entirely a Saxon country. Flowers and eternal summer are not the natural surroundings of the race. The arts of irrigation, the culture that is Egyptian, the vegetation that knows no autumn tints and falling leaves, the exotic odors that burden the air, the brown hills that can never be white with snow, the eternal yellow sunshine and blue haze; these things have never, in the history of civilization before, been the lawful and permanent property of those whose ancestors have been the brethren of white winter and the hardy nurselings of storms and cold.

There should rather be the tinkling of vesper-bells across long reaches of pasture lands. There should be flowing garments, and brown faces, and black eyes, and maidens with red roses in their braids. There should be old-world songs, and rustic dances, and the dim faint tinklings of guitar-strings in the night. There should be processions, and wayside crosses, and all the simple ways of a people who do not learn or change, who believe what they are told, and who are content with what has been for a thousand years. There should be laden asses traversing rocky mountain paths, and dusty footmen who hope sometime to reach their journey's end content, and women who sit and spin in open doorways, and the brown robes of friars, and the shovel hats of priests; and over all that sweet content unknown in American life.

And even here such things have been. It was primarily because the country was like Spain that they 13 were. They seemed permanent. There was no portent of any change. The Spanish tongue and faith were firmly planted amid surroundings so natural that the only difference was that they were better. There was absolute isolation. The sea was on the one hand and a wide wilderness on the other. The names were of all the dear saints and saintesses of times beyond the Moor, before the crusades, or the Armada, or Martin Luther. The Virgin, Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles, had this new realm of roses for her own, and they gave her fresh garlands every day. The Alcalde was here with his tasseled staff, and the soldier with his casque and his clumsy musket, and the crone with her herbs and her gossip, and the young man with his sombrero and his moustache, and the girl with her eyes and her rebosa. No land the Spaniard found in all his wanderings suited him and was made for him so nearly as this.

And he lost it first of all, and so easily. It was first by a real-estate transaction of the shrewd American, known as the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and secondly by the discovery of that which first, after mother church, has ever been the Spaniard's ruling passion, gold. The evil fate which timed the sequence of these events must be taken as part of the Spaniard's lot on this side the sea. He has gone, and the mementoes of his brief and picturesque time are solely those Roman towers which time is throwing down, and the mouldering crosses that stand above unnamed graves. The coming of these unheralded ambassadors of Christ; their conquering of savage tribes as though by a

necromatic spell; was wonderful. Their 14 broken-hearted flitting was almost tragic. But in neither case were they intentionally making history, and he who seeks to know the details of one of the great stories of human endeavor must delve almost blindly.

THE FIRST PALMS.

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## CHAPTER II. A SCRAP OF HISTORY.

PERHAPS it might more properly be called a want of history, for in the earlier annals of this unique republic the scrap referred to is never mentioned. Hale, Barnes, Quackenbos, Hassard, Bancroft, Johnston, Frost, Scudder—go through the endless list of elementary and abbreviated histories as far as you will—and you will find all the earlier facts succinctly stated in their order. All but this, perhaps in its way the most interesting of all. Every school-boy knows Captain John Smith to an extent of intimacy that entirely prevents his somewhat hypothetical exploits from becoming mixed with those of any other of his innumerable namesakes. Pocahontas and her adventures is as familiar as Cinderella, and almost as true. Sometimes the more prominent of the Pilgrim Fathers are known by name, and in many cases a distinct relationship is claimed with them. One immortal Spaniard claims precedence in the school-boy idea; poor old Ponce de Leon, who for the fountain of youth found the Okeechobee swamps, and for fabled wealth and eternal life a grave in the Mississippi. Nothing can be more familiar than all the men and perils of those early beginnings, the whys and wherefores of them, and the momentous and enormous results that immediately followed or have since grown out of them.

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For they pertain to the eastern coast; to the Saxon side. They are interesting because they are of us and our affairs. There is an egotism of which we are not conscious, and of which we often accuse others, which has sometimes caused us to forget that the American continent has more than one side.

It has distinctly two, and the early beginnings of the western coast form a curious parallel with those of the eastern. To trace this parallel may not be uninteresting save to those who view even history from a race and personal stand-point; to whom the picturesque is nothing and the practical all. Many of the curiosities of American history seem to have been lost sight of. Few reflect that there are sixty million people on this side the sea who speak the Spanish tongue, and least of all is it remembered that the motive that brought the winning and abiding civilizations alike to the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts was a religious one. The cupidity that planted Jamestown failed, but the zeal that nourished itself amid the bleak sterility of a country sparsely inhabited even by the Indians, lived. So the gold-hunting Spaniard died around the tattered banners of innumerable expeditions, but the Franciscan survived. It was the church of Paul that came to the East; that of Peter lived its day of zeal and died its lingering death in the West. Each begot a certain civilization, the chiefest characteristics of which still remain, opposed eternally, one to be finally and utterly obliterated by the other. The rivalry and struggle are of these times, for in the beginning they knew nothing of each other. A thousand leagues of what 17 is now the most splendid empire the world has ever seen lay unexplored between them, unknown to both. The Puritan saw his immediate surroundings; the Franciscan only his. But alike on both coasts was the seed of civilization planted in toil and tears, and nourished with prayer and blood.

The parallel does not begin with civilization and settlement only, but goes back even to discovery; with Leif the Lucky on the one hand, and one Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo on the other. The first was an event so dim in the past that until very lately it was not recognized as an historical fact at all, and the last follows it at an interval of only some five hundred years. The world was then wholly wrapped in that deep sleep which may be likened to the slumbers of infancy. The flight of eventless centuries did not count. For all that happened between, these two events might have followed each other immediately. In fact, all that did happen was that western voyage of Columbus which has linked his name forever with the greatest event in history. Yet it might be said, not without argument and dispute, but with as much reason and fairness as history ordinarily shows, that it is to Leif and Cabrillo we owe it all. Vinland and its successive settlements and abandonments, and New Spain with its fruitless expeditions and discouraged adventurers, are neither of them myths. From

the story of Leif did Columbus obtain the idea which sustained him in what was so long considered the original inspiration of his genius, and from Cabrillo and his lonesome voyages in wider and still less familiar waters than those of the Atlantic, came finally the wonderful story of California.

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For Columbus visited Iceland in 1477, and doubtless obtained surprising ideas from those mouldy records which were in existence long enough before and after his death to rob him of a portion of his fame. He was like many a more recent inventor in that he possessed the faculty of practical adaptation, at the moment when the sleeping world was awakening from that lethargy which is itself one of the unexplained wonders of history. The son of Eric the Red did not perceive the import of the adverse winds and the torn sails which cast him unwilling upon New England shores. Yet his kindred, and not those of Columbus, have finally made America what it is. Philip III. of Spain was one of those who do not forget, and when after Cabrillo came the Englishman, Drake, in 1578, naming the country New Albion, he grew jealous and sent a mariner named Vizcaino to explore the country. He did this, and made a report on parchment which was doubtless duly filed, and which staid in its distinguished pigeon-hole for a hundred and sixty-seven years. As for Drake, all English-speaking people have been in the habit of regarding him as a great navigator and explorer. Viewed from another side he was nothing of that kind. Reputable Spanish records speak of him as a pirate, and an intelligent Castilian will grow warm upon the point to this day. His offense consisted apparently in the very common modern one of impudence—it was the “New Albion” business that consigned him to infamy. Yet he never knew that Cabrillo had preceded him in the bay of San Diego, into which, and out of which, each one sailed in turn, 19 each as unconscious as the other of the remote results of his lonely find on those shining western shores.

As in the case of Leif's discovery, where at intervals of a few years various settlements were made and each in turn abandoned, Cabrillo's early find bore fruit. How many expeditions to “Las Californias” were organized, how many never returned, what sufferings and disappointments they endured, will never be known. They all failed like the settlements of the Danes and Swedes on the Atlantic coast. They both lacked the motive of those two opposing yet identical religions which burned like fire in the bowels of their adherents, which carried them through perils and punishments

like those of Paul, and which made them glory in peril and martyrdom. The Pilgrims faced the wilderness with an obstinacy inherited by their sons and daughters ever since, and the Franciscans amid cactus, rock, alkali and sage had no less a long series of vicissitudes and perils. It is true that the religious motives of the two settlements were different. One sought "freedom to worship God" for themselves; the other freedom to make others worship according to the dictates of an imported conscience. Both largely failed in these intentions, the result being in both instances to found a civilization in which religion can hardly be said to be either a foundation or a ruling motive. But it was the inspiration of the Cross in either case that furnished the motive for the two early struggles most prominent in the annals of a continent.

For they were times so inconceivably curious that no modern man or woman can form an adequate  
20 conception of them. Years and centuries were but as days. Reforms were unknown except as connected with the two forms of the Christian faith; forms so virulent that each was to the other worse than "heathenese;" an object of hatred such as in later times can not be engendered by the mere differences of opinion inevitable among men. Yet religion was the great power of the world. It was to believe all, and undoubtingly, that men lived. There was no science. Stories of inconceivable magnitude were readily believed, and tales of colossal proportions implicitly relied upon. The world was flat. The sun moved. Stars fell. Electricity was merely the quality of rubbed amber. Gravitation, co-existent with the universe, was an idea not to be evolved for hundreds of years, and the circulation of the blood had not yet occurred to any man. There were "gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire." A personal devil walked the earth unabashed and uncontrolled for four centuries after these times, and in despite of him there were undoubted miracles wrought among the faithful; miracles that all believed in on peril of their souls. Literalism was an implacable ghoul that claimed victims from every class. Then were born those beliefs whose descendant beliefs are not yet eradicated, and which tie the human race to the past.

Yet they were the times of learning, even of scholarship. Asceticism, the rapt attention of a soul to theories, has never thriven so well before or since. Alchemy claimed its disciples by the score, and an universal solvent was as nearly on the eve of realization as levitation is now. Knowing nothing,  
21 stupidity as to truth and gullibility as to theory and assertion were the rule. To have brains, to

reason, was to be a magician, and to be burned or to be famous accordingly. There was a passion for travel, and a thirst for the barbarous glory which came of self-reported adventure and research. The first time that the word "California" is known to have been used is as the name of a wonderful island. It is in a wild old Spanish narrative published at Seville in

#### SEA-GOING BOAT OF THE TIME OF LEIF THE LUCKY.

1510, and is there referred to as being "on the right hand of the Indies." The place was peopled with Amazons and Griffins, and the said women were black. Some reader of this narrative remembered it, and gave it certainty by being present when the country was actually discovered, for it was an age when a little story like that, told by a reputable man and having every internal evidence of probability, impressed itself upon the hearer.

Out of this dull and stupid mass of universal ignorance and credulity drifted Leif the Lucky, son 22 of Eric the Red, on one coast, and out of it came Cabrillo on the other. Between the two sailed Columbus advisedly, for he knew the luckless history of the lucky one. Both the former went here and there in frail vessels over unknown seas, kept by the Virgin or Odin as the case might be, and guided by a magnetized bit of metal hung by a thread held upon occasion with the thumb and finger. How little they knew of the results of their wanderings may be guessed by the fact that Columbus, the only purpose-guided mariner of the three, died after his third voyage without in the least knowing what he had discovered, or having heard the name of either Columbia or America, or being aware of the simple fact that Cuba is an island.

California is the child of Spain, and Spain of the sixteenth century is a more interesting study than she has ever been since. It is a matter of unceasing astonishment how far the old dominion of her *conquistadores* spread, and how wide are even now the influences and results they have left behind. The first European who ever looked upon the wide plains that lie between the East and the West, or studied, doubtfully, the ashen flood of the Missouri, or saw the ancient homes of the Pueblos, or made his forgotten grave amid the cactus and sage, was a Spaniard. She was the greatest maritime power of the world, and she combined with this the fact that she had more religion than all the world beside. This made an unique combination when we come to consider it, for she early

adopted rules which prevented the embarkation of any heretic, or relative of 23 a heretic, to her countries beyond sea. She proposed to keep them uncontaminated, and, when the rule was violated she punished the evil-doer with fines and whippings, often with both. Only natives of Spain proper were permitted to travel as passengers

#### SHIP OF CABRILLO's TIME.

to these new countries, and in 1662, a little time after California came into her hands, the punishment for so much as going on board an "India" ship without the necessary vouchers was seven years in the galleys.

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One can not but think with amused surprise of the ship, either Cabrillo's, or Drake's, or Vizcaino's, which lumbered into the harbor of San Diego fifty or a hundred years apart in those good old times. She was round-bowed and square-sterned, of at most some three or four hundred tons, and so bad a sailor that one wonders how she ever came at all. She was a stately craft, her decks loaded with towering structures at each end having a height equal to a fourth of her length. The sides "tumbled home," as sailors say, so that her greatest width was below the water-line, and her least on deck. She could not carry even her lower sails with a stiff breeze. If she was of 400 tons her average length was less than seventy feet, while an American vessel of 150 tons is now more than that. She sailed sidewise almost as well as forward, and she pitched and rolled and strained continually. She had two masts, and her bowsprit was as long as the mizzen. In her adornment and fittings she attained a luxury to which even a Pullman car is a stranger. The poop and forecastle were rich with carvings and emblazonry of armorial bearings, and the stern and quarters flamed with paint and gold. She had balustrades and galleries whereon aristocratic passengers disported themselves until the first hard blow broke them to pieces. Even the sails were ornamented with allegorical figures, and from every available projection streamed flags and pennants from twenty to eighty yards long. She was manned by some fifteen officers and seventy or eighty men, besides experts to work the guns, and a company of soldiers. The most important person on 25 board was the pilot, though he was third in rank, and he had charge of the course of navigation and the actual handling of the ship. Yet, as late as 1550, it was understood that he was fully competent, after a civil-service

examination, if he could read the sailing-orders and write his own name with a *rubrica* under it, after a Spanish fashion still imperative. He cost thousands of lives as an institution, but should not be too much blamed when it is remembered that it was a time when scholars considered America to be undoubtedly India, that the Antilles were a part of the main land, and that Greenland was an immediate adjunct of eastern Siberia. The life of a sailor on board one of these floating palaces was that of a dog; that of a passenger of an outcast. There were vermin, bilge-water, rolling, pitching, cramps, quarrels between the two pilots, guessing as to where they were. Three hundred souls were frequently on board such a vessel, and they guessed themselves across the Atlantic, and around Cape Horn, and up the long Pacific coast, and it was thus that California was discovered. What was called "ship fever" was a common thing in those days. Thus sailed the great Armada, and the men who cowed and scattered it, English sailors, were allowed to rot and starve in the streets of Margate by their queen, the stately and stingy Elizabeth.

Those were the palmy days of the pirates. There were whole fleets of them. They lay in wait for every straggling galleon, and often they took them as often as they came to them, fighting if necessary. Ships sailed generally in convoys and fleets, and there was 26 great ceremony. They saluted each other all the time. There was more powder fired away in ceremony than in fighting, and when the time of fighting came there was nothing to do it with. And the fleets almost always became scattered. A gale which now would produce no uneasiness whatever would then scatter, dismast or sink a whole fleet of galleons. They collided and ran into each other. A West Indian "norther" meant certain destruction to everything afloat. Lost galleons were counted not by names, but by hundreds. There was war with England. It lasted a quarter of a century. The English did not have any better ships, but they hated "Spain and popery," and they had the Britannic lust for Spanish gold. Here began that decay of Spanish power which has been the puzzle of historians. The Inquisition through several generations killed off the thinking and studious class at home, and the ocean storms and the English killed the active and athletic class at sea. They were both recognized factors of destruction even at the time. South America, the Antilles, Las Californias, had Spanish emigrants by the thousand. Though only a portion of these survived, they never returned. They were the wonderful seed of that miraculous planting whose fruitage yet survives, making the whole

of South America practically Spain, and coming up on this continent to the extent that about one-third of it was theirs until very recent times. This Spanish occupation was possessed of a virility capable of being supplanted only by Saxon blood. It is impossible to quite understand how a people that could so root itself abroad could so decay at home. As before stated, the customs, the laws, the language and the religion of Spain are the inheritance of some sixty millions of people on this side the sea at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is so striking a fact that every detail and reminiscence of its beginnings is of interest. Cortez, De Balboa, Ponce de Leon, Narvaez, De Soto, Pizarro, and later, but not least, the Franciscan Friar, Padre Junipero Serra, were men with great hearts and steady purposes, undaunted by anything the uncharted seas or the unfriendly shores might bring. Actuated by the love of God, or the love of gold, their conduct was in the same line, heroic every day. The last man, the Saxon, has taken California and made it what it is to-day. He has taken what he was pleased to call a desert, and has checkered it with railways, and starred it with electric lights, and dotted it with villas. His domes and gilded spires stand out among the green foliage his hand has planted, and through the morning mist shines his starry banner. It is his, but his occupation lacks the element of heroism, a heroism and toil he does not pretend to understand or care about. Thither has he brought the traditions of Plymouth Rock and the legends of Boston Bay or the James River, and perhaps something of his inner life is fed by them. Yet there is another history in whose traditions he must share. He must remember that the "stern and rock-bound coast" had its parallel on this, the opposite side, and on such traditions does his Californian greatness stand. It is a history strangely mingled with that sunshine and romance which goes everywhere with the Spanish people. It was embodied in religious endeavor, in missionary zeal, and such written memorials of it as there are, are found in musty documents that smell of the cloister and are larded with pious ejaculations. For, to repeat, it was religion, a pious motive, a zeal for Christ, that finally brought the men who came and staid, to either coast. They were wide apart. Each one would have prevented the other if he could, yet the result was in each case the same. The only difference is this: the Spaniard, the Franciscan, would never have crossed the continent—the Puritan did. Sunshine, the olive and the vine, were the natural surroundings of the one. Rocks, the gnarled oak, hard winters, a sterile soil, toil, and the little palisaded church in the woods whither the worshiper went with his gun, were those of the other. An awful creed and a frowning God nerved the Puritan

to the vicissitudes of duty. A beautiful and glorified woman, queen of the Angels and Mother of Christ, beckoned the other. The very climate of the two contrasting civilizations would mark the difference, and it is here remarked, to be contradicted, of course, and yet stand among the striking probabilities, that, people it as you will, unite it with the East by still more continental lines, let its people come from wheresoever, it is not the width of a continent, but a million miles that separate it from Puritanism, and an uncongenial soil will never nourish here to vigor the faith that conquered New England.

Following somewhat loosely the story of Spain and England in the sixteenth century, it is necessary 29 to refer to matters a little precedent but intimately connected with the subject. For it was the founding of the sect that founded California that is especially referred to. The great motive in men's affairs was in Europe for several centuries a religious one. They were all continuously engaged in making the world morally, or rather piously, better. Success seemed imminent every day of those old days, and all heathenness was very soon to come under the banner of that faith which, to say truth, has caused more misery and tears and blood, more longing and penances and prayers and wasted endeavor, than a thousand paradises could compensate. The priest went everywhere, and he and the soldier camped together beside all the lonely streams, and on the margins of the desert, on every shore where wind and current cast the caravel, or galleon, or open boat. Every ceremony that marked the landing of the tireless wanderers on a new coast included the planting of the cross, and thenceforth that land became a province of Christendom, and its benighted people came under a new law whether they would or no. The spread of the true faith was either the motive or the excuse for the pushing of enterprises and the promotion of expeditions which otherwise the commercial instinct would have condemned, capital in those days being "timid," as it is now. This was the power which Columbus brought to bear at last upon the mind of Ysabella Catolica, and through her upon her husband. It has been surmised that he would have been more easily successful if his theory had not involved the heresy that the world was round, whereas, in the case of 30 Leif, it did not matter to Odin or to Thor if it were round or flat. But pious thoughts at last prevailed, and the enterprise was patronized even at the risk of upsetting the accepted Biblical cosmos.

## THE REFORMER OF HIS TIME.

The religious idea that governed everything prevailed for a period quite beyond the historical conception of men of these days; say something like a thousand years. About A.D. 1200, or thereabouts, it occurred to a priest to establish a new order of friars. They were, to say truth, quite plentiful already. Orders in black and gray were everywhere, and the Jesuits had already begun to call down upon themselves the wrath of the temporalities. But this Francisco d'Assisi combined singular holiness with great powers of mind, and through him arose the great order of mendicant priests called Franciscans, or *Fratres Minores*, Minorites. The order was invented to bring about a reformed strictness in monastic ways. There were too many jolly ones, and a certain rubicund rotundity had become a reproach. There were Tucks in Italy and Spain as well as in England. Everybody agreed that the rules of Saint Francis were too strict for human frailty, and could not be successfully enforced. Even His Holiness had such a doubt, but at last consented to issue the writ, 31 so to speak, and let reforms come if they would. There was a general opinion that they were badly enough needed. The final result, coming after the lapse of centuries, is that Francisco d'Assisi is one of the immortal names of all history, sacred or profane. He was the founder of an order of ecclesiastical tramps whose feet have wandered upon every coast, whose brown habit has weathered every clime, whose corded waist and crucifix have mingled with every unconverted crowd, and whose poverty has never starved in any land.

Mediaeval Europe perhaps owes more to the Franciscans than to all other agencies, and in 1209 was born, and for a long time flourished, a spirit which has now passed away from human affairs. They went everywhere and were felt in everything. Among them there were great names. The author of the *Stabat Mater* was a Franciscan, and so was he who wrote the *Dies Iræ*; and among those of the gray robe and sandaled feet were Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus and Bonaventura.

In 1720, or thereabouts, a young man named Junipero Serra belonged to this already famous order. A fever like that of his father, St. Francis, was in his veins, and to convert the heathen was his longing and his continual prayer. His history will not be given here, and it is enough to say that he is truly the patron saint of California. It would not only be no impropriety, but would be a fitting

and proper thing, if his statue should be set by Protestant hands in every Californian town, and his heroic story told in every public school. Whatever his immediate 32 successors may have been, he was himself one of the few exemplifications among men of the power of that higher leading which sometimes glorifies a human life, and then departing lets the sordid ages pass with full churches, but without a single example to shadow forth the Nazarene.

Following his longing, Serra eventually found himself in Mexico with three companions of his sect. A hundred and seventy years had passed since the exploration of California by Vizcaino, and the country, pertaining to the realm of mediæval fable still save for his casual observation of its coast, was again almost forgotten. Expeditions not guided by faith or religion had gone there during those years, but like those which followed Leif on the eastern coast had accomplished nothing, or had never returned. There were Indians there, heathens, and it seems to have been the full intention of the Franciscan to visit and convert them when he left first his native shore.

The first Saxon settlement of territory within the present United States may be considered to have been at Jamestown, in May, 1607. The Puritans landed at Plymouth in 1620. They had a hundred and forty-seven years the start of the California movement, for it was not until 1767 that the Jesuits were expelled from the peninsula of California, their church property given to the Franciscans, and Serra's opportunity given him. The spot selected was that which had become known through the survey of Vizcaino, then, as now, called San Diego. For it must, to comply with the piety of those times, be San or Santa something. The name is the same with St. James, or 33 James (Santiago), who is the patron Saint of old Spain, and whose name has for centuries been the Spanish war-cry and talisman. His "day" is the 12th of November, and that was the date of Vizcaino's arrival. Thus the place and the huge county as large as a State in which it lies, lost forever the fleeting title of New Albion, and became, even to the Saxon, the legacy of Spain.

From this 12th of November, 1602, that which now is known as South, or Southern, California, became Alta or "upper" California. The people of those times knew little or nothing of all that we include under the name. They were very ignorant of its resources when they lost it, nearly two and a half centuries later. But what they considered to be theirs extended without limit or boundary

upward, downward and sidewise in all directions. Certain in the correctness of their intentions, the certainty of their tenure and the perpetuity of their rule, they did not investigate. Time is nothing to a Spaniard.

So it was to San Diego that the Franciscan and his companions came. It is so easy to say they came, and so easy to do it now, that it is difficult to appreciate that awful journey. The soldier and the priest came together, as usual, and the conquest was one of Church and State combined. There was an understanding, expressed or implied, but afterward conveniently insisted upon, that the contemplated missions should remain missions only, and exist for that purpose exclusively, for a period of ten years, and after that become civil communities. They existed in full vigor for more than fifty years.

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### **CHAPTER III. THE BEGINNING AND THE END.**

#### **THE CALIFORNIA DESERT.**

A WOMAN who has the fortune to live within a stone's-throw of one of the old missions said to the writer: I do not know how it is that these buildings became so dilapidated. They are not so very long deserted, and in the seventeen years that I have been beside this one not a single stone has changed in the least. It is precisely as it was when we came.

If there is any indication of a singular fatality about these sole remaining monuments of the early times of California, there is also about the story of their building. Everybody has been pleased to speak of Serra who has ever touched the subject at all, but they have also been pleased to stop when they have said but a very little. A sort of fragmentary biography was from time to time written of him by his friends and brother monks, but the record seems to be so meager as scarcely to afford more than a glimpse of a character which must nevertheless be considered a remarkable one. Men do not see the future, and are unwilling to trust their guesses in regard to it. All but a few, whose confidence never fails. One of these latter was Junipero Serra. He was nineteen years in Mexico

before he came to California, and for most of that time was in the outlying regions of that country engaged in missionary work. When the Jesuits were expelled in 1767 from what we now call Lower California, he was fifty-six years old, and was then but just entering upon a supposed realization of the dream of all his life. He was not a doubter of either human or divine truths.

There were sixteen persons in the land party with which Serra was. There was still another land party, and two more were to go by sea in two ships. None of the four parties knew anything about it. They were taking the chances that a part of some one of them would get there. A man of those times named Galvez had charge of the outfitting and practical part. It was to him that California is to this day indebted for a considerable addition to the resources found when, after seventy-nine years, an eminently enterprising people became interested. He ordered the carrying of the seeds of everything that would grow in Spain, together with two hundred head of cattle. Of these came the herds that were afterward so much at home, and of the seeds and cuttings came much that is most profitable and beautiful 36 in California now. There was, besides, a very complete assortment of holy vessels, crosses, banners and things necessary to the uses and services of the church. There are even strong evidences that so heavy and inconvenient a thing as a church bell, several of them, was thought of and included.

If the reader has any idea whatever of the country near the coast in South California, and of the southern part of it where it joins the peninsula of Lower California, and then can imagine it in a state of nature, covered with cactus and sage, crossed by a jumble of mountain ridges, waterless save in hidden places and absolutely pathless, he can have some conception of the rigors of this tramp from Villicata to San Diego. We may remember that there was a double purpose in it, the first of which was the colonization of California, and the bringing of it into the economy of Spain, and secondly, the conversion of those who, in the cant of that day, both Puritan and Catholic, were known, as by the Mormons now, as "Gentiles."

At the end of the written instructions of Galvez, which were intended to govern the expedition, he stated, among other things, that one of the objects of the enterprise was "to protect the country from the ambitious views of foreign nations." This is very Spanish, for the beautiful wilderness of

California was then more utterly unknown than are now the scenes of Stanley's explorations in the heart of Africa, and probably its latest "foreign" visit had been that of Drake, one hundred and eighty-nine years before.

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Indeed, the only knowledge of where they were going was obtained from such record as had been made of the "survey" of Admiral Vizcaino, in 1602, a hundred and sixty-five years before. The two points that attracted especial attention were San Diego and Monterey, both named and described by him for the first time. Yet so closely was this first definite scheme of colonization and conversion planned, that there were orders to plant a mission and garrison first at San Diego, then at Monterey, and then one half-way between to be called Buena Ventura, a favorite Spanish name meaning "good luck." The monks, being Franciscans, had thought of their patron, and wished to name a mission for him among the first, and began the journey with the information that if St. Francis wanted one, and would show them the place, he might have it. They thought he did, and it is known to this day, distinctly and clearly, as San Francisco. A hint may be given in a consultation between priests and soldiers in the heart of Mexico, and a couple of centuries afterward may be found surviving in the bustling metropolis of a people to whose tongue and sympathies its name is a stranger, and perhaps more in need of missionaries now than it was at the hour of its obscure baptism.

The expedition having been divided into four bodies in all, Serra insisted upon accompanying one of the land parties, and this, seemingly, for the reason that he had a lame leg, acquired in walking from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, twenty years before. All the degrees of martyrdom seem to have been fully appreciated in those times. One of the ideas of the 38 age may be partially illustrated by the fact that Serra never did anything for this difficulty in all the years after, but either aggravated it or was indifferent to it. Though he immediately broke down when the march began, he refused to be carried, and used his misfortune to wonderful purpose during the remainder of his life. He walked up and down the coast many times, and only the year before his death went on foot from San Blas, on the western coast, to the City of Mexico, a journey which is quite a feat when ridden, and in these times.

The journals of that first momentous march are vague to the extent of being little more than pious ejaculations, occasionally accented by a brief statement of fact, studded here and there with a terse and enthusiastic picture included in the space of a sentence. These meager facts have been made the most of by all the chroniclers of the time, but almost the whole of the story is that it was a toilsome march through a cactus-grown wilderness by two small parties of men who did not know where they precisely were, and had no knowledge each of the other party. Among other facts stated in letters and journals was this: "It is a country where nothing abounds but stones and thorns."

It is a fact that, until very recent times, the South California wilderness differed generally very little from what is now the Colorado or Yuma desert. Irrigation, the searching for, finding and using of the hidden springs of nature, has made the change. It was the desert only the Padres first knew, alkali, cactus, sand, sage, brown and dreary mountain ranges utterly unexplored, and they themselves strangers in the midst of the savages they came to convert.

Had they come far, they must inevitably have perished, and the country would simply have lain still and waited for the Saxon who was the predestined heir of all, who did not wait for the Franciscans and their civilization, and who, when his time came

"THEY MADE NO MISTAKES:" CALIFORNIA MISSION AND VALLEY.

eighty-five years later, entered as one does who is in no way concerned as to who has been there before him.

But it was not far. The present writer must in all sincerity state his entire ignorance as to precisely where in the upper part of the peninsula of Lower California Villacata was situated, but the missionaries left there on March 24th and arrived at San Diego on May 13th. The party with which Serra 40 was, however, did not reach there until six weeks later, and when they came they found everybody sick with scurvy, and many dead. The ships were there. One of them, the San Carlos, which arrived last, lost all her sailors but two. The San Antonio, the other, which sailed a month and a half later than the San Carlos, reached San Diego twenty days the soonest. There was some

difficulty in finding the place. An age of discovery and maritime adventure could not furnish any better sailors than that. She also lost half her crew by that fatal malady, now almost unknown.

Sometimes, when one has leisure to contemplate the examples of greatness offered by human history he is impressed by the paucity of those who had that quality which the vernacular calls levelheadedness. Surely in those early days of California, in the remote beginnings, only one man showed such a quality, and that was Galvez, the man who arranged for the cattle, the seeds, plants, etc., and in whose Spanish mind was running not so much the love of God and the triumph of the gospel as the aggrandizement of Spain. Serra, having for once left off his missionary enthusiasm for a moment's attention to temporal facts, writes of the journey thus: "The tract through which we passed is generally very good land, with plenty of water, and there, as well as here, the country is neither rocky nor overrun with bushwood. There are many hills, but they are generally composed of earth. The road has been in some places good, but the greater part bad. About half way, the valleys and banks of rivulets begin to be delightful. 41 We found vines of a large size, and in some cases loaded with grapes; we also found an abundance of roses, which appeared to be like those of Castile. In fine, it is a good country, *and very different from old California.*"

This letter was written July 3, 1769: No one knows or can guess the half-way spot described, but, considering the authority, it would have answered for a very good South California advertisement of about 1887. Padre Serra was an enthusiast. He beat his bare breast with a stone, and burned it with a lighted torch, to illustrate to the Indians the pains and penalties of hell. But neither he nor any of his brethren ever made a mistake in the location of a mission, and they are invariably the best locations in the California of to-day. Walking barefoot over those thorny miles, possessed with a burning desire to baptize, longing only to preach the everlasting gospel, one of the most devoted men who has ever followed in the footsteps of the founder of the Christian faith, he yet knew where the land was good, where the wild grapes grew, where there were roses which reminded him of those that in his youth he had seen in the braids of the maids of old Castile.

The kind of man the great pioneer was may partially be discovered from another letter of his, dated at Monterey, in 1769. In this he wishes to know the name of the present pope, what friends have

died, so that he may pray for them, the names of any newly canonized, so that he may pray *to* them, and adds: "We proceed to-morrow to celebrate the feast and make the procession of Corpus Christi  
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#### WHAT THE MISSIONARIES FOUND.

43 (although in a very poor manner) *in order to scare away whatever little devils there may be in this land.*"

Any one who has lived among the Mexicans may know that this was not a bit of ecclesiastical humor. They, according to the same training and belief, proceed annually, or oftener, to "scare away the devils" by processions and ceremonies very well suited to the purpose if the fiends have any feeling or taste or nerves whatever. Serra was a man who believed. He believed it all. He had the original theological ideas, and all of them, which now seem so incongruous in a practical and doubting world. He knew. In all his days he never wavered in the idea that he should convert the heathen of California, and yet he knew nothing of the task before him. He was an enthusiast who remained so regardless of difficulty, or fact, or report, or actual demonstration. And there was therefore never a missionary enterprise before or since so successful as this. Here are some data, not given from the religio-spiritual view-point, which was Serra's, but from the temporal one of his brethren and successors.

During sixty-five years only thirty thousand Indians are actually known to have been in the church at one time, and these were engaged in the mission establishments, kept and lodged there, and occupied in profitable industries. Yet the early beginnings grew into establishments at that time unequaled elsewhere, and since impossible anywhere. There are no reliable facts showing how many heathens were all the time outside and unconverted. Some 44 have said there were 120,000. In fact their number has never been precisely known.

About eighty thousand is the sum-total of all the Indians ever buried in the *Campos Santos*, or consecrated burying grounds, during the whole period of the mission establishments. If those domiciled in the missions, and employed there, averaged thirty thousand during many years, the

estimate leaves an immense number of gentiles to bury themselves in the chapparal. But it leaves the consoling thought that this eighty thousand at least are among the saved.

But the temporal side of the account is an encouraging one. In 1834, when the establishments had begun to decay, the figures were something like these:

The line of missions was about seven hundred miles long; from San Diego northward to the latitude of Sonoma. They lay contiguous and adjoining. Their sites were the most eligible spots of the sunniest land the world knows. Their affairs were administered by the Padres in a manner that gives one the idea that some modern American enterprises, notably some extensive railway systems, but not by any inadvertence including the various "Trusts," would do well to go to the Church for their business managers.

Seven hundred thousand cattle grazed on the mission pastures, with sixty thousand horses and an immense number of other domestic animals.

A hundred and twenty thousand bushels of wheat were raised annually, besides all other crops.

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The usual products came under the following heads: wheat, wine, brandy, soap, leather, hides, wool, oil, cotton, hemp, linen, tobacco, salt, soda.

Two hundred thousand head of cattle were slaughtered annually, at a net profit of ten dollars each.

Gardens, vineyards and orchards surrounded or were contiguous to all the missions except the two most northern ones. Dolores was considered beyond the Spaniard's natural temperature, and San Rafael and San Francisco de Solano were founded too nearly the end, and were strangled in infancy. Vineyards, after the traditions of Spain, were especially relied upon for comfort, and the vine was then, as now, a principal feature of the country.

The total average annual gains of the missions from sales and trade generally was more than two million dollars. This on an uninhabited and distant coast where commerce in our sense was unknown. The value of the live-stock alone was in 1834 two millions of dollars.

There was, besides all these resources, a “pious fund” in Mexico, constantly accumulating, which had belonged to the Jesuits and was now the property of these missions. It amounted to two million dollars. Toward the end the Mexican government could not resist the temptation of borrowing from this, and finally General Santa Ana confiscated it bodily. It is to be hoped that Franciscan shades, looking over the battlements of heaven, may have derived some consolation from that sultry afternoon at Buena Vista, when he met his fate at the hands of a man named Taylor, who had no more regard for military etiquette, <sup>46</sup> according to contemporaneous Mexican history, than to fight a battle in his shirt-sleeves.

It now appears that the Spanish government had a theory upon which these missions were established. It was that after ten years the Indians would become citizens, living in agricultural communities on lands secured to them, and self-supporting and perhaps prosperous. They intended to use the missions to this end. The final acts and decrees which secularized them seem to hint at this original intention, and to consider the time ripe for its fulfillment. The present conclusion is that this theory of the capacity of the American Indian for citizenship was a false one, to which there is only one exception in all the annals of our history. To him nothing now remains of all the fathers taught him. He does not remain himself. Through what means the remnant of him became what it is, may be found by reading a glowing chapter in Mrs. H. H. Jackson's volume, “Glimpses of Three Coasts.” The Indian of the missions existed in great numbers only some fifty years ago. What has become of him numerically is a question often asked, but which no one can answer, except by theory. He “died off,” say the oldest inhabitants, and there is often an opinion expressed that had he been left alone; had the Franciscans never come at all; had the fearful American plan of “reservations” been at last adopted; some thousands of the original wanderers of the South Californian hills would still be there. Contemporary testimony is to the effect that he knew about as little as any being that ever bore the human form, and that <sup>47</sup> the Padres made the most of him,

spiritually and temporally. The turning of spiritual agencies, in the hands of those who bore the habit and the vows of poverty, into skillfully conducted money-making establishments, has had a tendency to prejudice mankind. It is amusing to study the article, "California," in the average reputable encyclopedia. The last one examined says: "These zealous apostles, backed when necessary by armed coadjutors, planted various missions, bringing under their influence, such as it was, the great mass of the aborigines. They became prominent, even in Spanish America, for everything that could paralyze the progress of a community." Most commentators upon those times allege that the Indians were in reality slaves; that they were flogged and forced in the name of religion; that those outside would not come into the fold, and those inside could not get out. It seems certain that when the heroic soul of Junipero Serra departed at Monterey, in 1784, the end for which he had endured and prayed was lost sight of, and the human love of ease and gain arose uppermost in all minds. Thus the briefest history of South California develops one of the saddest stories to be found in the annals of Christian endeavor. It was a work wrought almost in vain. There are no results. There is just a splendid story spoiled, a lofty and pious life wasted, and the doom of a race sealed by the mere effort to civilize and save them. For hardly more than one hundred years have passed, and the few wretches one encounters, living in huts and wandering through the country at sheep-shearing time, are almost the 48 entire visible remnants of the thousands that blackened the hills to watch the entrance of the San Carlos, or the San Antonio, under Point Loma, or who ran, scared away, when the soldiers fired their pieces as an accompaniment of that first mass at a spot facing the port, when the corner-stone of a fatal civilization was laid on the Western coast, on July 16, 1769.

Perhaps it is one of the ancient and trite stories of mistaken zeal, of misguided heroism. It will nevertheless remain ever a story worth the telling. The mission buildings of California, lying broken and deserted in the endless sunshine beneath a matchless sky, exhale an odor of reminiscence and inquiry. They are among the few monuments of a country that has nothing very old. Some of them have taken on all the melancholy beauty of moss-grown decay, and at nearly all the visitor questions within himself as to why they should have been so utterly abandoned. They are incongruous with the times. They are ruined abbeys. They lack every personal surrounding they

were intended for. Every one has a history that can now never be told. But the dreams come. One remembers that they cost money and infinite toil, that they were built with a skill and solidity, and grew into a beauty, that is of Italy and Spain, and not of this new land even as it is today, not counting the fact that all that is was then as undreamed of as is now an English republic in the heart of Africa.

But the dreamer knows that after peril and toil had come rest and peace; that of the visions of a 49 Spanish monk had apparently grown the most splendid missionary success of any age; that these people were at home; that the leagues to the eastward were as impassable as those of the shining ocean to the west; that there was wine, sunshine, security and isolation. In the then conception no change could come. It was the Empire of God, ruled by the Church; a form of patriarchal communism that was at last the earthly ideal of the Kingdom of Righteousness. He almost wishes that his lot had been cast then, and that he knew nothing of that which now makes up his life. For there still hovers about the California missions an atmosphere which all the winds can not blow away, which is unique in American life, and of which these ruins seem to afford the only taste.

And then he knows that with Junipero Serra died all; not only the life he individually led, but the life of the curious age he represented on this continent. It was an unnatural thing this side the sea, and within the inevitable boundaries of that republic in all whose territory there are no such ambitions, no such hopes, no such energies, and one may quite as truly say, no such beliefs.

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THE UNIVERSAL ROMAN TOWER.

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#### **CHAPTER IV. A MEMENTO OF THE OLD DAYS.**

THE village of San Gabriel is only seven or eight miles from a city which the most prejudiced person from some other Californian locality must acknowledge to be a beautiful one, and which possesses a unique charm for every wanderer not to California born. The city blooms and booms with the newness of the very newest American life; the village is drowsy with the feeling of a

perpetual afternoon. There are places in this strange country from which this feeling is inseparable, and it seems preposterous that in San Gabriel it should ever be called early in the morning. There are always long shadows and a peculiar yellowness of the atmosphere. There is a faint humming sound as of bees. There is nothing doing. There is one short street crossed by another, and these four corners, lengthened out a little by some white-washed adobes that are of the olden time, is all there is of it. These houses have been furnished with “shake” roofs at some period greatly later than that of their original erection, and their walls are coated with the thickest and deadest white ever seen. But their windows and doors are twins of those found wherever the Spaniard and adobe soil have existed together at any period. The walls are very thick, and these openings are very small. One does not step up to enter in, but invariably down, and with a feeling <sup>52</sup> that it would be better for him to stoop a little. In lieu of sidewalks, there are only crooked paths through the gray dust from door to door, and there is a straggling and indefinite end to every thoroughfare and every vista in trees and shrubbery and tangles and general crookedness. The voices one hears are almost invariably foreign, and the words are provincial Spanish. There are glimpses of shawls over heads, and of feet that are shod, but deplorably stockingless, and of little boys with brown faces and very black hair and eyes, and with only one suspender and always coatless. There is no wind and no noise, and you are sure there never was any, and that this day is very nearly like all the other days that have ever come to San Gabriel. Yet it has only taken you some twenty minutes to reach the place from a metropolitan depot, and if you go out to the uncertain end of the street you will see a mile away a big and balconied hotel, and beside this there is a street-car track.

The first time I had ever seen the place had been five years before, on a summer afternoon. I remember how the soft breeze from the west came through the little open depot shed, and stirred the tall weeds with swaying yellow heads outside, and that I could smell the eucalyptus trees, and that I heard that dull and universal drone which seems to be a sound made by silence. The sun shone hot and the dust lay thick, and there was the jerky bustle of linnets hither and thither, and a brown lizzard stopped at the doorsill and winked at me, and a chipmunk scuttled across the shining rail of the track beside the door with an impatient squeak. There was nothing in it all to <sup>53</sup> make the least impression, yet I remembered it, and went back to it.

It is the seat of a mission which in its day was the richest of them all; a presage of later times, since there is, perhaps not in all the world, a bit of soil quite equal to the San Gabriel Valley. It is another one of those cases of not making a mistake in location which has become proverbial. You would know it was one of the old places by certain signs above enumerated, and if you did not see the church at all, for there is an occasional discordant clangor of old bells whose tones are never those of any modern casting. It is one of the two or three remaining mission churches which has a roof on it—a modern one of shingles—and consequently where services are still held. But it is, on week days at least, a service purely perfunctory. There are no worshipers. Morning mass had been omitted on this day within my knowledge, and the priest did not rise until ten o'clock, and when at last he came forth and dawned upon me I felt within me a prescience that when I came again I should not mourn if he came not at all. For he was the most striking incongruity I have ever encountered at a California mission, where incongruities are less to be tolerated, perhaps, than anywhere else in the world. A rasping brogue accent noted his first words, which were addressed to an unhappy man, not a priest and yet in holy orders, who was his and the church's servant, and they were thus: "Hoh! has the felley com weth thot mayl yit?" A heavy shock of reddish hair grew very low on his forehead, and a big jaw and coarse lips made you wonder where the impulse could have come from which led him into the vow of obedience, poverty and chastity. An old black coat was covered with patches of white mould where the fungus had grown upon innumerable soup-spots. His face was unshorn and his eyes were red, and his manners exceedingly bad. I have an idea that he looked upon his office as a job, and upon his functions as occupation, and that he was not satisfied with his present assignment. There are Protestant clergymen whom one assigns mentally to the office of a quack doctor, and I regretfully discover Catholic priests who seem to have made a narrow escape from a row of bottles, a big mirror and a long white apron.

The ecclesiastical servitor I had already encountered, and he was not adverse to the interview I had been having with him. He met me at the door of the ancient sanctuary, and remarked with a German accent that it would be necessary to charge a fee for entering, owing to the need of repairs in the church. I smilingly assented and asked him to convey to me a vague and distant hint as to how

much he conscientiously thought I ought to contribute towards the rescuing from premature decay of the venerable building, and he unhesitatingly said “mens fo' bits; vimmen, two bits.”

I gave him a dollar in a moment of imprudence, and an elocutionary fervor immediately took possession of him. I do not know if he had been accustomed to spell-bind visitors with it every day, or if it was specially reserved for such extra occasions as the present, but unquestionably it had been written out for him by some one, and had been duly committed to memory by him. It abounded, as far as I heard it, in graceful delineations of virginal and saintly character, and in passages which reminded me strongly in their style of some of the “lectures” of the lodge-room. But while he had his back to me, and was waving his hand toward the ancient images behind the altar, I went away to one side to examine the worn leather of the worm-eaten old confessional where the Franciscans had leaned their elbows a century ago. To obtain possession of me and of my undivided attention he had to stop and come to me, and in the pause that ensued I asked him what he really had that was old to show me. He replied that the principal treasures of this church were undoubtedly the twenty-one—I think he said twenty-one—actual and legitimate portraits of the apostles and disciples, and he waved his hand around the walls to indicate them where they hung in a long row on each side. With a countenance which probably bore every indication of profound belief I asked him if he was sure they were actual portraits, and he said they were, “vitout ony tout fatefer.” He then told me that they had come here, the gift of Ferdinand and Isabella, because San Gabriel was intended to be the Cathedral of California. I neglected at the moment to call attention to a discrepancy in his narrative of a little less than three hundred years lying between the generosity of the celebrated monarchs mentioned and the founding of the California missions, and so he went on to say that every one of them had been painted by Murillo—twenty-one Murillos hanging dilapidated and without frames on the walls of an old building, seven miles from Los Angeles, and yet the 56 “boom” had been in real-estate, and not a picture mentioned.

He mentioned a few moments later the fact that the Fathers yet remaining at San Carlos had lately been obliged to sell the mission plates and utensils to buy bread, and I then said to him that a single authenticated Murillo, sold at half price, would probably tide over any emergency the brethren might come to in a hard year. He said, yes, it might, but they didn't want to sell them; as soon as

they got money enough they were going to have them *painted over*! I asked by whom, and he said a gentleman was coming to see about it tomorrow—a very good painter indeed.

In the afternoon I passed that way again, and he had four young men, probably from the hotel a mile away, in front of the altar-rail, and was going uninterruptedly through his lecture. I caught the words “te most loofly of vimmen; te most anchelic of anchels,” and sneaked out again. I do not know if he told them about the Murillos. That was not a part of the lecture, of course, and oozed out in a personal conversation I had with him. Perhaps it was not intended for publication, but I cannot refrain from divulging the fact of their existence to my art-loving countrymen who may find themselves in the neighborhood. At most an inspiring view of them, in a fair light, only costs “four bits.”

This same accomplished man showed me the redwood ceiling lately made to hide the rafters of the roof—a very decidedly modern innovation—and told me it had cost five thousand dollars. When it comes <sup>57</sup> to the inherent pecuniary value of abstract sacredness, aside from antiquity and associations, I do not pretend to judge. It may be worth while to repair. But

#### THE SAN GABRIEL BEES.

I am of opinion that the church of the mission of San Gabriel could now be entirely rebuilt as it stands, with some modern improvements and conveniences, <sup>58</sup> for little more than twice the sum he mentioned as the cost of the ceiling. He also told me that the government of the United States had left this mission only four acres of land, including the cemetery. Others say that the ground assigned it, and now valuable and rented by it, is more than forty times the amount mentioned. Should I ever revisit San Gabriel, I should feel strongly inclined to have this man report to me all his store of knowledge, for I did not really question him to any extent. We passed a huge stucco tomb beside the church. It lacked, as usual, any inscription whatever, and I asked him if he knew whose it was. He said, yes, it was a sea-captain's, for all sea-captains were buried with their heads to the pole-star, but he did not remember the name. There was one black and time-worn crack in the side of it, out of which the bees were issuing, and the place smelled of honey. Stopping to ponder for a moment upon the uses, industrial and otherwise, to which we may come at last, this man said

he had no doubt there was a great deal of honey there, for those bees had been there a very long time, and the place had never been opened, all of which was evidently true. But by and by some of the more pugnacious of them began to object to our presence, and I was forced to hurriedly depart. Then my chaperone said they never stung *him*; he had once taken three dollars' worth of honey out of that place and escaped free. At that moment his attention seemed to be violently attracted to a spot on the back of his neck, beneath a dilapidated blue neck-tie he wore without any collar, and he hurriedly went away through the tall mustard-plants 59 which overgrew the place, and I had no further reliable information from him.

Looking very old, but partially repaired into shabbiness, San Gabriel shows the least signs of its former importance and great wealth of any of the California missions. The walls and arches of the quadrangle are entirely gone. There is not a sign of the rows of cloisters. The remains of gardens and fountains have been obliterated. The church has no transept, and is but an oblong building of an aspect not particularly imposing. If it had towers they were small, for the wall shows neither angles nor greater thickness where they would have been. Perhaps architectural beauty was not intended, for the Roman arches are all wanting, and as a peculiarity not noticed in most others, the outer walls are buttressed to the eaves. I looked longer at a little outside balcony near one end of the building than at any other single feature, for it seemed quite without any religious purpose. It was a narrow structure, railed neatly with iron, shadowed by an immemorial pepper-tree, and the steps close beside the wall by which it was reached were deeply worn. Perhaps it was the entrance to the organ-loft, or only an architectural caprice; perhaps a place whence the Spanish recreations of those days could be conveniently overlooked. For San Gabriel had an extensive and famous bull-ring in its time, and while bull-fights may not have been directly favored by the Franciscans, we must not forget that they were Spaniards, and there was never one of that blood whose soul was proof against the national pastime.

## 60

The mission was also an extensive manufactory. In the very yard, quite close to the church-walls, are still to be seen the remains of the huge furnaces and cauldrons where they tried tallow and made soap. Something is there also, now filled with earth and almost enigmatic, which looks like the pit

of an ancient water-mill. Outside, across the road, and by me found by chance, are the remains of a huge cement water-main. It is laid above ground entirely, and being some four feet wide and deep; conveyed a torrent. Perhaps nothing could recall so vividly the old and prosperous Saturnian days as to imagine this aqueduct brim-full through the midst of the shining valley. It seems indicative of the utter passing away of all these early blessings to see that the railroad, when it was built, cut it square across. There is water yet, but it comes in iron pipes. There is a hydrant at the corner of the old church, and cocks and troughs in the village street. They do not change its sleepiness in the least; it is only incongruous. It was better when it splashed and foamed, and ran in rills down the village street, and was played in by the urchins, and when the Indian girls went to the fountain with tall pitchers on their shoulders, and it followed the hoes of the Indian laborers over the low fields. In those days water was as precious as in Biblical days it was in Palestine, and, as in Palestine, wherever it ran, the land flowed with milk and honey, and there was happiness unalloyed by investment; peace undisturbed by the price of land; security that knew no margins; sunny years that heard no booms.

## 61

There is a cemetery. Its principal feature is dilapidation. This is about all that in these times any mission graveyard ever indicates. No graves are visible there which extol in stately Latin the virtues of either convert or friar. Those are sunken, gone, ploughed over, utterly lost. The oldest part of this has been utilized for the practical purpose of raising oranges. That which is not so old, is a couple of acres of wooden crosses, all modern, but all dilapidated, with here and there a memorial of white marble. One of these says of the sleepers, "*Requies cant in Pace,*" and adds another unintended item to a long line of tombstone pleasantries. A brick mausoleum near a corner of the church, seemingly old, has been broken and rifled, and nobody knows why or when. Nobody cares. *Camp Santo*, sprinkled with holy water, and the dedicated resting place of believers only, seems in all Catholic countries to be inconsistently neglected.

There are only four bells at San Gabriel, though there are hanging-places for five. Thereby, of course, hangs a romance. There was a señorita in old Mexico, name and date given more or less, but unimportant, who had a lover. He came north and died. In the course of masses for his soul's

repose, the young lady sent to this mission a beautiful and costly bell. For a long time it hung in its niche and rang the faithful to prayers, and was one of the institutions of the place. Finally it disappeared, and there are those who say that it was taken down when sequestration came, and was returned to its donor. But a grizzled American says, in his practical way, "It aint best to 62 believe that yarn. There was thought to be considerable silver in that bell, and some priest or other, don't know who, sold it. That's all." You will always find some member of this prosaic race on hand to destroy romances, little and big, and some of them are able to bring forward the most disagreeable and inconsistent conclusions.

One of these came within my ken as I sat in the shade at the street corner. He was a young man with an old face and a gray head, friendly and hilarious, talking Spanish to all comers, and evidently a man of the country. He addressed me in English, with a strong Southern inflection, and we entered into conversation. He told me he came to San Gabriel in '49, when a boy, and had known the last days of the remaining Franciscans. I hinted that I should like to hear about the old times. He said "there is nothing to tell; I can put it all into two sentences." I asked him to do so, and his reply was that they came, had any number of Indians to work for them, it was a good country, they grew rich, and when the Mexican government took their lands from them, they went away angry.

This succinct summary of the situation seemed to him a very full one, but I remained unsatisfied. Insisting upon further particulars, he told me there were some 2,000 Indians here in 1849, all of them having been connected in some way with the industrial operations of the missions—ranches, herds, fields, factories, etc. "In plain English," I said, "kindly answer for me one question. Were, or were not these Indians slaves?"

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The reader is aware that this question has been much discussed, and that no one seems to quite understand the peculiar and unique situation that is perhaps quite without a parallel in the long story of the contact of the European with the Aborigine on this continent. These California Indians lived toilsome and patient lives, and did an immense work. They had never worked before, and were reputed the most extraordinarily shiftless of all Indians. Why did they? Enthusiasm; readiness to

believe only the good and reject the unpleasant; admiration for the heroism of those fathers who came first;—these do not answer the question.

My new friend had told me that he came from a slave State. That he need not have done, for he spoke English with that accent no ear can fail to recognize. Knowing him but ten minutes, I still knew he would speak truth if he answered at all, for it was in his demeanor and the general look of him. Many times and in various forms, I had asked, or hinted, the same question. Elderly “Californians”—as the California Spaniard is always called—have described to me at length the life of the missions as they had partly seen it and partly heard of it, and in effect have almost invariably led me to the conclusion of serfdom; of at least that form of feudalism which makes its toilers slaves under a politer name. Then when I would finally say “well, they were slaves then, were they not?” they would protest with an endless procession of vehement “no's.”

He looked at me a moment doubtfully, seeming to enquire my motive in the question, and then, perhaps remembering that the question of slavery everywhere is a thing of the past, slowly answered, “Well, yes, that's just about what they were. They got no wages and they made 'em work like the d—l. What else would you call it?”

“How can you make an Indian work?” I said.

“Well, I think they scared 'em into it;—told 'em they'd go straight to hell if they didn't, and made 'em believe it. Oh, they do that with others than Indians.” This last significant remark seemed to be in the nature of supplementary proof, and I pursued the subject no further. But I bethought me of Father Serra's own story of the marvelous efficiency of one of his sacerdotal banners, that had upon one side a picture of the Virgin and upon the other a realistic representation of the old-fashioned Hades. I knew also that a coercion unto godliness by a means not very dissimilar to that of the Padres had been practised by the church of my forefathers, and mine, for many generations. But the shrewd notion of these missionaries in turning the powers of which they had control into a means of coercion to field labor, was a view of the case quite new to me.

I asked my friend what became of the Indians, and he answered in the same old comprehensive way; he said they “died off.” I always asked this question when I could find opportunity. I wished to know whether there would ever be any variation in the answer. If there had been, I should have concluded that my fate had changed, and that very likely something startling would soon occur to vary the monotony of my placid days. There was a cause for this 65 Indian fatality, and a study of it leads to some conclusions not usually much dwelt upon by the average philanthropist and enthusiast. Least of anywhere is it cared about in California. They are gone. The past is accepted with unanimity and composure. But it is a part of the great Indian question of this continent, which for a century has been an illustration of the ancient story of the two knights who saw the shield from opposite sides.

My friend declared that he had no business, never had had any, and was not looking for any, and intimated that this was not unusual in San Gabriel in his day, or even now. Whereupon I ventured to enquire whether the Californians, i.e., Spanish, population were increasing or the contrary. He gave it as his opinion that they were not. Upon my asking why, he gave me another comprehensive answer comprised in the words, “Well, they don't amount to much.” By this he meant that they were not fitted for competitive life with the Americans, and were being pushed to one side. He told me presently, with some feeling, that his wife had been a Californian, that he had always been with them and knew them well, and that the present conditions in California were not understood by them. Every one of them could have been wealthy; few of them are. Beyond certain limits and restrictions no Spaniard will ever go. “I am not so very old,” he said, “not so old as I look, but I should not be surprised to see almost the last of them myself.”

He arose and went whistling away, followed by some half-dozen little brown-faced boys, who pulled 66 him by the skirts of his coat, and clung to him by every available portion of his person. They were saying something about going fishing, and he made several solemn promises to them on that subject while still in my hearing. A man whom the boys love is never a fool, is almost invariably a gentleman in his nature, and may be counted upon to say truth if anything. But he may be such an one as Irving has immortalized. In a corner as quiet and almost as quaint, surrounded

by every inducement to idleness with few of its penalties, brooded over by tradition and sunshine, surrounded by mountains rugged and bluer than the Catskills, I think I have encountered the Rip Van Winkle of San Gabriel. But this man owned a horse and buggy, into which he managed to climb with as many boys besides as would have made a coach-full. Perhaps he owned a rancho, and I believe he did. He was Rip, but of the California variety. Onions and cabbages were the products of the country of the first. Here, a hundred feet away, the water was foaming out of the throat of an iron pipe, and running away in black and shining furrows beneath long rows of orange trees, and vindictively nibbling at the bare feet of the laborers who coaxed it hither and thither with shining hoes.

After he was gone, and I had nothing with me on the sunny corner to console myself withal, I began to think of what had come to the sons of the virile *conquistadores* who had once laid half a world under tribute to *España Madre*, that they should come next after the miserable “Digger” in their chance of early extinction. They are not heathens, and have not been since the names “Goth” and “Vandal” became familiar in all the ancient stories of valor in war and strength in peace, or Alaric closed his palm upon the beauty and strength of classic Rome, and something of a solution of the question came to me at the moment. Of the four village corners I have mentioned, three bore on the fronts that strange and odious tergiversation to which our American eyes are so accustomed that it has ceased of itself to disgust us —the word “Saloon.” Perhaps even the fourth one was of similar character, and lacked only the name; —four small-sized gin mills facing each other in a village, which but for them might seem a corner of Arcadia, the home of simplicity and peace. I could hear the tipsy Spanish voices within trying to sing “La Golondrina,” but so maudlinly that it might have been a Comanche chant. Spoiled by the toilless traditions of their ancestors, lured by the modern price of ranch-lands and deceived by the blandishments of a climate that robs poverty of half its terror, the native Californian is drinking himself into that imbecility which presages extermination. It is not alone at San Gabriel that the gruesome process goes on. Every isolated village, every shearers' camp, has its continuous orgies. It is not with wine. The Spaniards have crushed and drunk the red blood of the grape for ages, and if it has poisoned them they have been

very slow in dying. It is the rampant fluid known as American whisky whose seductions he has learned and whose death he tastes.

The contrast to this, in the same sunny region, is the slant-eyed Mongolian. A dim suspicion must sometimes find lodgment in the mind of every visitor that this shrewd and toiling economist, this Asiatic sphinx, may sometime come forward not as a claimant, but as an actual holder of the lion's share. He may do everything else, and he can and still survive, but he does not drink. A moment after the saloon idea had dawned upon me, I found this same Chinaman having it quite his own way, fearless of any municipal discouragement. From an adobe a little way down the shady street I heard a sound that was dimly like the cackling of hens, mingled occasionally with a little human screech of triumph and exultation. John was at it; a dozen of him. They sat on either side of a long laundry-board, and the game they played I could not understand, and rather than disturb a national amusement, which had also the effect of lighting for the first time for me the stolid face of a Chinaman, I did not linger long in the doorway.

For a unique mingling of some of the most diverse sensations of life, commend me to the village of San Gabriel, Archangel. Call it Gab-*rail*, as was intended by its founders, or what you will, you will not find its equal for many a league. It stands in the midst of the most fertile plain of a land whose barrenness and whose fertility, lying side by side, have given rise to two distinct opinions, alternately in the majority for fifty years. Looking out of its embowerment, mountains fence it on every hand, and shimmering in changeless summer itself, a huge patch of white snow looks down on it in June. For a hundred and twenty years its drowsy ears have listened to the clangor of its mission bells, and until times that must seem to it exceeding new, it has been accustomed to scenes foreign and transplanted; pictures out of the common life of Spain. It is still older than these, for here stood that group of booths and huts the invaders called a *rancheria*, and here have lived and died the dusky generations of whose history or times or thoughts there has been left us not a word or an indication. Surrounded now by all that is new, by the improvements of the world's most restless denizens, by a skill that accomplishes in a single year the results of a Spanish century and an Italian eternity, it is still San Gabriel, abiding in a peace that is held about it by a spell.

**CHAPTER V. SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.**

BY no possibility could any little chamber be more gloomy, unfurnished, generally dilapidated and desolate. A battered old pine table stood in the middle of the floor, and beside it a mended chair. Another, with a rawhide bottom, stood beside the door. There was no whole glass in the one window, and so the shutters were closed. An old and worn black priest's coat hung against the wall, and the cheapest variety of cotton umbrella leaned beside it. An ecclesiastical book lay on the table where it had last been used, and close beside it a pair of steel-bound spectacles. The only sign of creature comfort, the one human weakness of the place, was a little bag of cheap tobacco and a wooden pipe that lay beside the spectacles and the book.

Dust, the dust of years, decay, forgetfulness, decrepitude, was everywhere. It filled the spaces of the cracked red tiles of the floor, and lay thick on the wide old window ledge. It had flown upward and perched on the beams of the ceiling. If one had swept it away it would only have alighted again, for it belonged there, a part of the material of the place. Some of it was the excretæ of generations of insects, and some of it was composed of their powdered wings and heads and legs. Some again was vegetable; the microscopic cosmos that could tell of fungi and 71 lichens; of every minute growth of beam and rafter the dry, bright air could nourish.

On one side was a little fire-place; the incongruous thing of a land where, winter or summer, the great sun warms the world unflinching, yet where it is often cold. It was doubtless in its day good for old bones and slow blood when the white sea-mist would come creeping up the narrow valley before the early mass. It was black with a hard and ancient soot, but it had been long since a fire had crackled there. There was a picture on the wall. I do not remember of what, but it was of something sacred, and it was very cheap. Perhaps, as was fitting, it was the Mother of Sorrows, looking upward, a lithographic sadness in her pleading eyes, and a hand, with a ring on the finger, laid upon her heart. But I know that the stains of time ran obliquely across her face, and that it hung crookedly upon the wall.

There was little else. You could observe the yellow glint of sunshine through the wide cracks of the opposited unopened door; the door that had once opened upon a huge square that was edged with cloisters; that was full of dark-faced people; that was set with fountains, and crossed by walks, and studded with flowers. Its huge outline was there still, and on two sides still ran the pillared arches that had supported the roof of a porch about sixteen hundred feet long. Opposite every arch had been the low door of a monk's room; his cloister, where he had meditated upon the evanescence of all earthly things, and had told his beads, and had lain upon his uncurtained cot and slept as men do to whom the

#### WINE AND WASSAIL.

73 Church alone is infancy and motherhood and livelihood and care and love. The roof was gone, and the long rows of arches stood alone. Some of them were broken off in the middle, and the half-arch still hung there, uncracked, sustained by a singular tenacity of material. Where yet the red floor-tiles remained beneath them, beside this little back-door of the priest's room, they were worn by the going to and fro of feet that have been dust this seventy years and more, that had had errands from this cloistered square to the outer world; that were bare or clad only in sandals, and that mayhap had trod the thorny road from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico, from Mexico to Guadalajara, and then to San Diego, in ceaseless and toilsome crossings of an unknown desert, and thence to this sunny spot where rose the now fallen towers of the mission of the soldier-monk, San Juan Capistrano.

Beside the little chamber I have described, once, perhaps the public office or business-room of the mission, there was another, the bedroom. It was stiller and darker and sadder than the first. There was nothing there but a single bed, and loneliness and poverty. But it is not a place of ghosts, or else priests do not believe in ghosts. For I saw the place that night, as its broken arches shone in white moonlight at the end of the village street. I knew that old graves lay thick behind the church, all ivy-grown and all unmarked, and that there were memories and reminiscences in every nook and cranny. The aged priest may have been asleep there, alone and unattended in a little den surrounded by crumbling ruins, 74 but ghostly visitors do not disturb his slumbers. So idle, so tenantless, so out

of keeping with the spirit of these times are these moonlit ruins, that even the ghosts have forsaken them.

Just in front, in a porch whereof the roof is still intact, there is an old wooden settee, smooth with age and innumerable sittings upon it. This fronts the world and the public; the world and the public of the old times; and there sitting, I tried to recall those days. It were hard to do without imagining myself also a Franciscan, which God wot I am not, and I had ill success. But down through the narrow valley—where runs a railroad now—I could see the shining sea. A faint black smoke hung trailing on the horizon where a steamer was passing. I thought it well enough that things should end when their time came. For had the towers never fallen; had the angelus bells been pealing across the yellow hills; had the fair church whose whole interior now lay open to the sky been full of dusky worshipers; had a brown robed Franciscan sat beside me; I should have known by the smoke of the steamer and the distant scream of the train that that hour had arrived. The curious thing; the pathetic and unjoyous reflection; is, after all, of so much wasted toil and tears and hope and faith. That is what it amounts to. The eternal church and living faith, sole owner of a beautiful and isolated world; rich, powerful, successful beyond hope in the beginning, could stand but eighty years. The babe who saw the beginning lived unto the very end. The people who came with her, and the Indians she converted, are gone as well. Here and there one sees a 75 brown face; here and there hears the old tongue; once in a day, or a week, may encounter a laborer whom he knows to be an unmixed descendant of those amiable aborigines whose benighted lives stirred the soul of old Serra. If secularization had never taken place, if the Pious Fund had been piously regarded until now, if the presidios had paid their debts, if the enormous landed holdings had been left to the course of nature and law, all would long since have given way before that advent which is the opposite of that upon which the church is founded. This aged priest lives alone amid the fallen stones his brethren laid. The roof of his chapel is propped with a post. His coat is old, his vestments tarnished and shabby. He has reminiscences for his friends, and is otherwise quite deserted. Some lone devotee may now and then come and bow in succession to the faded Stations of the Cross that hang on the mouldy walls of what was once a mission granary. Some contrite soul may at long intervals come and whisper its sins to him through the rusty perforations of the worn and worm-eaten old

confessional. A few may gather to hear the mass whose bells are still rung on the ancient wheel whose rude circumference they rim, and whose iron crank was once whirled by an Indian boy at the elevation of the host. The mission is fortunate, for at most there is no priest at all. Here he serves, in faith, patience and old age, to mark for the wandering and irreverent American, and with singular emphasis, the difference between Then and Now.

There is a quiet beauty often hovering over decay and ruin, and no locality is so subject to such a spell 76 as an old church. So to the average American, who came to heal his lung or his fortune, who considers only climate and existing facilities for irrigation, who is thinking only of the exigent and emphatic now, perhaps a California mission bears a strong resemblance to any decrepit structure, say a dilapidated barn. Another is given to reflections upon the temporal sagacity of the Padres, of whom he makes the old averment that they never got into a poor locality. A third merely looks and passes on, unable to rightly comprehend the meaning of a memento or a monument. He says it is of the past, the “dead” past, and thereupon, if he knows any poetry at all, he quotes Longfellow on that point. Such an one sees nothing but grass and rocks and rolling hills at the field of Gettysburg, nothing but a whimsical piece of industry in the bronze and homely face of Lincoln where he stands in a Chicago park, nothing but fact anywhere —the fact which is of the present, and which concerns him alone.

By ascending a rickety stairs you may find all that is left of the library of the mission and monastery of San Juan Capistrano. Hardly is it a stairs at all, but a compromise upon a ladder, and the steps are so steep that the rise has been notched to slant inward, after the fashion of the teeth of a saw. There are books; the books of a time when the art of the printer flourished, but the binder had not acquired his modern cheap facility. Nearly all are bound in parchment; what we would call rawhide; and are of a kind that will bear much thumbing. The Spanish and the Latin prevail in this assortment. There is not a volume in the 77 English tongue, or of a date later than Seventeen-Hundred-and-Something. Many of them are in manuscript, written with a quill upon the old-fashioned unruled foolscap that everybody uses in Spain to this day. The monks were good penmen, and the ink was very black. You will encounter here a record of “Matrimonios,” the dedicatory first page of which was written and signed by Junipero Serra himself. He was seventy years old when he wrote it, and

yet it would stand for a fine quaint specimen of pen-and-ink engraving. There is another old volume of exercises, a prayer-service for every day in the year, which is handsomely printed in red-and-black, and was furnished with metal clasps. This book is thicker than it is long or wide, and is the quaintest thing in the collection. You may take it in your hand with a smile at its clumsiness, but you remember that it was a thing of personal use under all the circumstances of those times. The edges of the leaves have been thumbed and turned until they are worn into notches. Certain favorite pages are covered with an ancient gum which obscures the type, and which is all that is left of the personality of whoever it was that carried it in the fold of his habit, and whispered its prayers to himself in the shade of the live oaks, and turned to it for spiritual food when his bodily stomach was empty. Perhaps it figured in some of those graphic episodes vaguely hinted at in the sparse records it was thought worth while to make. It may have been at Monterey under the oak. Perhaps it was at San Diego when, amid the dying and the dead, that first mass was said. Perhaps it was at San Gabriel when 78 wrath was turned to adoration. One can only vaguely regret, for the thousandth time, that the secrets of the dead, and what the dead leave behind them, can never be told.

Curious things are the primers; the little books of exercises; of the Indian children. They made them as they came to them —out of rawhide. One or two of them were not lost or torn up, and lie here. Hardly less interesting are sundry long Latin essays written by some sophomoric monk who fed his mind on the silence of the wilderness, and did something for the enlightenment of future ages; for the perusal of a wanderer by rail who casually picks up his essay, divines that it is in Latin, wonders at the interminable length of it, whispers to himself, “Tu Tityre recubans,” etc., blows some of the dust off the sheep-skin cover from mere force of habit, and lays it down again.

But this squalid little dusty chamber was not the library at all. It is like all the rest; a mere modern makeshift. On three or four old shelves the books lie piled, and some of them are on the floor, or over on the window ledge, where they keep company with a dozen empty wine bottles. And there is one strange thing. The Padres were not making history, or lending any assistance whatever to that interesting process. In all this heap of quaint volumes there is nothing like a daily record, a diary, a bit of description, a fragmentary record of the experiences of one man. No one knows precisely, or by more than a guess, what the real life of the missions was, how many Indians there were, what

variety of humanity 79 they represented, what anybody did, or said, or thought. Every fact has been gathered by inference or from outside sources, by whosoever has attempted the slightest sketch of those interesting times. An enormous work was accomplished, industrially if not religiously. A form of the commune was established which seems to have more than realized all modern isms and ideas of that form of political and industrial life. For fifty years of the life of the missions it is impossible to conceive of the situation as other than a patriarchal form of Indian slavery, but slavery nevertheless. Yet no man knows if it was really so, and even this prominent feature remains disputed and unsettled. Toils and perils the Padres had, innumerable from the nature of the case, and often insurmountable. There is no complaining record to tell the story. The secrets of aboriginal life, the motives and desires and cunningness of the barbarian mind, were all laid open. The Franciscans knew them; there is not a word to tell of them. So nearly obliterated are all the details that the building of nineteen missions, the raising of the stately and beautiful establishments for each one, the bringing under cultivation of thousands of fruitful acres, the magic coaxing of running water over miles of arid rock and sand to make vineyards and rose-gardens and orchards, the governing and administration of all through many years, the wealth acquired and the trade established, and finally, the sudden fall, the broken-hearted abandonment and complete decay of all; —the whole story —seems like a tale that is not told; a vision of the night. Perhaps no scheme of 80 conquest was ever so successful, and save a single uprising at San Diego which was forgiven and unavenged, there was no blood shed through it all. There were soldiers, but they were few, undisciplined and far between. There were civil magistrates, but they lacked all physical power to enforce. Either the Indians of California, speaking different languages and not all alike, were the most docile savages the

#### A DILAPIDATED CORNER.

world has ever known, or Catholic and Protestant alike may turn to the scant record of those missions as a singular example of the power of the Cross, and of the success of those who “endure all things” for the love of Him who patiently endured as an example to whosoever would conquer in His name. Whether it be so or not, there is no narrative to explain. The pioneer of forty years ago

knew as much as we do now, and no more. Two generations have passed. 81 The Indians are gone, and the oldest inhabitant can not explain whither. It is a lost civilization.

But if one will be patient, and will sit down beside the ruins of Capistrano, or San Luis Rey de Francia, or Gabriel, or any picturesque memento of them all, and will dismiss the world and the flesh, he may get himself into a mood for dimly understanding. Here, where we are sitting now, the Padres came at eventide, and looked through the canyon upon the sea, and gossiped as priests, like other men, occasionally will. It was the half of an open square. There was a rail in front to which visitors tied their horses, and the general gossip of the community went on as it must in every association formed by men. The reader will kindly remember that these holy men were also Spaniards, also that the cigarette is an ancient Spanish institution, to the benign and consolatory influences of which the priesthood has ever been amenable. The world belies them greatly or else monks, even Franciscans, are jolly. These men were pleased. Their lines had fallen in places so pleasant that everyone has been pleased ever since. It was the land of oil and wine. Their granaries and casks were full. Their dusky neophytes numbered thousands, and the ideal kingdom of Faith was established permanently. One could almost wish that such had actually, as it was apparently in those pleasant days, been the case, and that one had been there to see what now is a picture only to be recalled by such vain imaginings as these.

A semi-savage origin is traceable in all one sees. The long rows of arches are stately only after a 82 barbaric fashion, wonderful as they are for the time and circumstances of their construction, and picturesque because proclaiming Spain in miniature, and coming by a wonderfully long road from Palestine itself. But they are not precisely alike. The hand of the Indian is visible in their curves. Some are longer than their fellows by a finger's breadth, and some are slightly higher in the bend. Among the red tiles of the pillars some are thick and some are thin. Symmetry, either of material or of architecture, is not to be expected of the savage of any race, and for all the purposes of picturesque decay the result answers quite as well.

On the left hand, at the corner of the square, stood the church itself. No Protestant sanctuary in America, roofless for fifty years, would look as well. The walls are nearly five feet thick, not of

squared blocks of solid stone, yet where standing at all almost uncracked. The chancel and its roof are still intact, showing all the proportions that for their uses were well nigh perfect. To be entirely in keeping, there is under the round flat dome, and amid the ashes of the past, an open grave. What father's bones were disturbed by this useless sacrilege no one knows, and there were but bones to reward the delver's search. Serra was buried in the chancel at San Carlos, of Monterey. Some brother, whose name has not descended, and honored only less than his superior, lay here.

There are graves enough, and all unmarked. The little square behind the church is full of them, and in a little corner are two or three whose low stucco mounds, covered with trailing vines, have been basking places for the lizards from time immemorial. A yellow-eyed brown bird was there, interested in the gruesome corner to the extent of scolding vociferously at the most distant intrusion. To be entirely in keeping with surroundings there was also there a skull. It was so huge that it was made to form a part of the flimsy fence that ran partly across to hedge in with some lazy show of care a nameless resting place. It was not a man's, but doubtless one of the few remaining mementos of their times, showing at least the cranial conformation of the mission ox. The bases of the horns, decayed and shrunken as they were, measured nearly eleven inches round.

All the ridge upon which the mission stands is covered with the remains of the establishment, and it was by no means one of the most extensive. There is a tradition that adobe is more lasting than stone, and that rawhide will endure longer than either, and these buildings were of the sun-dried bricks, whose permanency surprises every stranger. On the right of the entrance, where, in imagination, we have been sitting while the western sun went down into the sea, was the kitchen. The old oil-mill, its stone still in place, and the rawhide thongs which held its cross beam to the uprights still hanging shrunken to the wood, is there now. There is a disposition always to try to imagine, to dimly recall, the industrial occupations of any period to which our own appears a striking contrast. A man would be justified in searching all Spain for a barber's basin such as Don Quixote mistakenly adopted as a helmet, and if we pry into the culinary establishment the Padres found sustenance in, we do but add a supplement to romance. But there is no guess to be made. There are only blackened walls to show the uses that are gone, and the faintest odor of garlic, even of that, has been wafted down the years. But there is the stable, somewhat useful to this day, and

one gazes with interest at the wooden manger-bars between which the asses of those times pushed their mottled noses, and even at the square mounds, rising even now some three feet above the common earth, which show where once the goats and kine passed their ruminative nights.

And there was a dungeon. Whether for priests or converts, it is certain that the most virtuous community never yet existed long without one. It was a room behind the church, whose only openings are a door, still barred, and one square window, high up and closed with a solid shutter. Within the recollection of elder residents, there were stocks there; the ancient and effective machine which shut down upon the prisoner's members, and gave him a seat whose hardness was conducive to painful reflection upon the evil of his ways. It were a wonder if such simple means were all that were needed for the discipline of the barbaric majority, and, if true, one could heartily wish that the climate had the same effect upon a later generation.

The professional anatomist pieces together from scales, or wing-feathers, or claws, or thigh-bones, the monsters of the Paleosaurian age, and gives to the 85 world the plaster-casts of creatures beyond reason or belief by the citizens of a later time. There may have been, and doubtless were, features of mission life incredible in these times, and the process of discovering them is similar to that of the anatomists. But they are human traits, and in trying to recall them, it is necessary to remember that men are governed almost entirely by the times in which they live. Here was practical socialism without a theory. Here was the Church without a doubt. Both things are now impossible, and these ruins are mementos of a time when they were possible. The church of the Franciscans in California was a direct importation, in an age of profound belief, of the church of Spain. The church in Spain is the same as that of other Catholic countries, and yet it is not. To this day there is a difference below the surface. Perhaps the undefined thing which we can not understand about these missions is the secret of their great success, combined with that of their total failure. As one wanders about the ruins he is continually turning this question over. But the answer does not come unless it be in the form of a theory that the time permitted them, and that such time has passed. For the machinery was not different from that used everywhere by the same sect for the same purposes. Some of it is here still. The little chapel that was a granary, whose sagging roof is propped with a post, is full of it, all dating back to the old times. The pictures on the walls are dim and blurred with time. The linen

which serves as a base for embroideries seems to have come, and very likely did come, among the ecclesiastical stores provided by Galvez, a hundred and twenty-five years ago. In a little mouldy room at one side are some wooden statues about half life-size. They are sometimes headless and often want fingers, but are fine specimens of an art which is now, in its perfection, among the lost ones. The wood of the faces and hands is covered with a composition that has retained its finish and color through all the years, and the eyes are of glass, and as perfectly made and preserved as those are which are now used in the arts which require them.

Another small closet contains some curious ecclesiastical machinery. There is a board with a hold at one end shaped like the handle of a saw. The sides of it are studded lengthwise with iron grips precisely like those our forefathers used for the end-handles of the hair trunks of their days. Take this machine up and twist it vigorously from side to side, and you will be startled at its capacity for that kind of noise which is known in the vernacular as a racket. Another ingenious contrivance for the same general purpose is a three-cornered box, studded with swinging irons like the other, but inside of which there could also be rattled with telling effect a loose stone. These machines figured in the Good Friday processions familiar to all who have lived in Mexico or Spain, and serve as an appeal to the sensibilities of the community at large.

An ingenious contrivance is a wheel whose rim is studded with little bells. Turn it once over by the crank, and each bell falls over once and rings the particular key it happens to possess. This stands behind the altar and marks a particular moment in the ritual.

And without these things this sanctuary would be poor indeed. Roof, walls, rafters, pictures, bells, images, are all of the olden time. There is nothing new. The mighty Church whose property it is rises to success and wealth, or descends to poverty and isolation, with an evenness of demeanor and a steadfastness of purpose which commands the respect of the wide world. The machinery of her elaborate

## THE CORRIDORS.

ceremonial may be dispensed with. Her missionaries have threaded first the intricacies of every wilderness solitude the continent knows, and where mass has once been said in a hut or tent, or beneath a spreading tree, the cathedral has afterwards arisen with unfailing certainty. Only here has the process been reversed. The cathedral has fallen, but the priest and the ritual survive. I do not know if he believes its towers will ever rise again. Perhaps he never questions, but to his mind must often occur the singularity of a situation perhaps quite without a parallel over so wide a country. All the surroundings, the whole country, is historic from the efforts of his brethren of a 88 common faith, and in the midst of unexampled progress in every field but the religious one, he remains as a kind of memento of all that was, and remains alone. I do not know his name; I never saw him; but in all my recollections of the sunny ruin by the sea, I find the humble and unknown man the most prominent figure.

The visitor to Capistrano will observe a curious architectural discrepancy. A portion, almost one-half, of the ruined church is not of stone, but of adobe. In other words, it has twice fallen and been once rebuilt. An earthquake in 1812<sup>\*</sup> was a very different thing from what the same event would be in 1889, hence it has but the semblance of a tradition. It is not even known whether the rebuilding with adobe was ever entirely completed, and the observer would say that it probably was not. For on the gray stone walls, still erect and uncracked, the rampant winter vegetation of tropical California has gained a rooting, and will throw down stone after stone. Where the adobe in its turn has melted down, there are vast ridges and mounds, covered shoulder-high with a miscellaneous growth of weeds. There is a plant with clustering yellow blossoms whose roots would wedge apart a Roman battlement, which inserts itself in every crevice, and flaunts there above statueniche and grave, and flourishes upon air. Studying such ruins, one can but think of the immense advantage accruing from the absence of frost. It is 89 certain that but for this fortunate thing there would now be no missions at all; nothing but mounds of adobe and heaps of stone. They are not solid walls. Faced on each side, almost anything was thrown between. Therefore the earthquake wrought havoc, and remedying the misfortune as best they might, the Padres committed the monstrosity of repairing masonry with the sun-dried bricks which latterly constituted one-half of the side walls, and the

whole of the tower-end, of what had once been a most hand-somely-proportioned and elaborately-finished religious structure.\*

The earthquake which destroyed this most beautiful of the mission churches, occurred during early mass on December 8th, 1812. Some thirty people were killed, and many others wounded more or less seriously. The Church was built almost precisely like that of San Francisco Antiqua, in Guatemala, also an earthquake ruin, though not so large. A series of low domes composed the roof, one of which yet remains over the chancel.

The quaintness, to American eyes, of what remains can not well be put into words. We never made anything like it, and never shall. For with all our former flimsiness and present solidity; with all the money we have wasted or spent on Egyptian portals or Corinthian stucco; we have never, in a single instance, come as nearly as these missionary monks did to the filling of one great desideratum; the suiting of a building to the surrounding landscape. It is an indefinable thing which can not be fixed by rules, and one does not know wherein precisely the appropriateness consists. But it is present and apparent even in ruin and decay. Take the sunshine, the gray-white sky, the yellow atmosphere and the rolling brown or green hills backed by higher ranges that are purple always, and imagine there a pile of American church architecture. The one may fit a 90 town—some towns—the other fits eternally its place among the fastnesses of a wilderness that can never be really changed by any effort of civilization. Some, the majority perhaps, may wish to see relics and hunt decay. But when you are gone again, if you have seen the country aright, your mental picture will be completest when you remember Capistrano sitting upon its knoll and looking down the glen to its speck of sky-blue sea, or San Diego at the valley edge asleep upon the shoulder of a hill, or San Luis Rey in its basin of sierras, trailing a green-and-yellow ribbon at its feet, or Gabriel amid its vineyards, drowsy with the fumes of wine, and each one will seem a thing that is a part of its natural surroundings, placed there by an ineffable and superhuman taste, and made to fit, with a preciseness that time has only mellowed and blended, all its settings.

This is for the present. It is all one can carry away. The cold tones of a photograph do but spoil the soul of the reality. Colors might answer, but the artist has not yet come. All the past is but a memory, and it is but memories that we purchase with a whole life's experiences. There is still wanting something to complete the picture, and that something is beyond attainment. It is described by the word Life. For these things are, so to speak, preeminently dead. Baalbeck is not more

lifeless, or Tyre more perfectly a thing of the past. But, with them, so is also the country dead, while with these it has put on the newness of a life beyond the wildest dreams of any monk who ever dreamed. Set up again the walls, and rebuild the towers, and ring the bells. 91 Cover the hills with herds and the valleys with vines. Recall the hosts of Indians and banish the American. Let the English tongue be again unheard, and put the railway so far away that even the village of Chicago, floundering in its swamp around a trading-post and a fort, knows it not. Let the storm-worn ships from around the Horn prowl along the coast for their cargoes of hides, the only and the infrequent visitors from the intangible and unimportant world. Bring again Spain, and make San Blas an important port and Guadalajara a capital. Take away Los Angeles, and give the little white-washed adobe pueblo in the valley her full name and her proper people. Let only monks in robes and sandals, and soldiers in leathern jackets, and Indians bearing burdens, traverse the paths from mission to mission. Let us speak only of Yerba Buena if we mean the locality of the Pacific capital, and mention only San Carlos if we mean Monterey. Let a brown-walled rancho appear occasionally in the landscape, and let us make it the complete establishment of a feudalism almost unknown to the middle ages, perfect in independence, isolation and peace, the home of a life neither California nor elsewhere can ever know again.

And let us put in its last and important place the last essential thing; the confidence and self-satisfaction of provincialism, the unapprehensiveness of which ignorance is the sturdy mother. Let us desire no change and dream of none, and live in confidence and peace, protected by the Virgin and the saints, and forget that this is America at all. Then shall we have something like a memory of the California missions, 92 not in decay and ruin, but in the days of their fruition and prosperity. This is the real past of which they are the mementos.

Is it worth recalling? This truly American query will be the first in the minds of the majority of those who will read these words. There is a sense in which it is most assuredly not, and another in which a vague and undefined regret must surely follow any comparison of it with the California of today. Arcadia was never a reality, yet in some of its forms it has burdened the poetry of every people, and been dreamed of and imagined since the infancy of the human race. And of this idealism humanity has never grown weary. There are few things worth striving for, but one of

them is peace. In the tiredness of a ceaseless struggle, there are few to whom has not come, or first or last, a fearful pleasure in the thought of that sleep which knows no human reveille, which lets the æons pass, which lies forever in the deep oblivion of dust. The peace which to some degree may come in life was never in this world nearer its idealization than at San Juan Capistrano three-fourths of a century ago. It can not be put into words, or painted, or sent by mail, but something of it broods there still. Men can not make it, or entirely destroy it. It is in the air, and to supplement it and add to it, is the feeling that the past has not yet quite gone away. The dust lies thick in the village street, and in it one almost looks to find the print of sandals. Below the brow of a little hill a stream of water purls across the road, and there is a roadside hedge composed entirely of the odorous California wild rose. In the shade of a walnut tree in 93 the field close by, there is a glint of rural calico, and a group of women are washing garments upon a flat stone beside the stream, as their grandmothers did in the same spot while the American revolution was in progress. A rambling and roofless adobe is upon one side of the road, its brown walls defying time in a way that is the usual puzzle to all who believe in the natural course of things. It has a little known history, wherein it differs from its neighbors that are much older, and were occupied as appurtenances of the mission establishment. It was built by a man who came near embodying in California the traits of a race of Caballeros, who was almost the last of the long-sword gentlemen and fighters, and it cost him thirty-five thousand dollars. He was of the same class and time of the man immortalized by Fremont in his story of the terrible little struggle known as the affair at San Pascual, and within these walls were nursed, by a woman, the wounded of that day. Among them was one American soldier, whose name and whose grave are now alike unknown. It is but another instance where “the northern eagle shining on his belt” did not make any difference, and where Ximena appears again from among the people whom we habitually designate as “Greasers.”

At all events the ruins are there, telling the same story a broken monument does, and the hills, and the sea, and the sunshine. They rule. As to Irving and his reader the Moor and not the Spaniard still inhabits the Alhambra, so to every visitor does the robed and sandaled Franciscan still abide at San Juan. The church has been once sold at auction, 94 has been used as a residence, has been besieged, and has still clinging to its decay the monastic odor, the sense of belonging to God.

Defying time a faint blue fresco still clings to its inner walls, and even the names scratched upon it by frame-seeking wanderers does not make it less a place whence the odor of incense has scarcely yet departed. The railway threads the valley, and one wishes it was not there, yet it does not so much affect the mission as it visibly does the old stage-yard down the street where, since early in the fifties, the reeking horses drank at the log trough under the huge pepper-tree, and whence the rocking vehicle, with infinite bustle and importance, carried its cramped passengers away again on a winding road between the endless hills.

Far up the little valley there is still older mission; the first San Juan, standing beside the trail of the Padres when they went northward in search of Monterey. Near where a trail used by them of necessity, and many a time since, comes down out of the hills into the valley, there is a sycamore whose like will not be found in half a continent. Its shade at noon will cover 120 feet. It was as big, perhaps, a hundred years ago as it is now, and no band of weary footmen ever passed it by. It recalls the vicissitudes of those early wanderings, and the solitude and silence that then shut in the Cross. The little valley is as silent now as then, and all unchanged by the hand of man. Only the sleek California cattle come and lie in the shade, careless of all the past and all that is to come.

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But even as I write I see before me the contrast and antithesis of all humility or toil or sacrifice for crown or cross. I have heard in all the watches of the night a certain Voice, calling in utter wantonness the passing of the hours, and, if for prayer, utterly failing of so pious a purpose. Its owner now lies prone in the morning sunshine, his gorgeous tail trailed out behind him, and his bronze breast in the yellow dust from which it will arise as unsullied as his notorious vanity is unruffled. It is a being whom my reminiscences will ever designate as the Sultan of San Juan, and he is one of the striking trivialities of a place so full of opposite associations. For him there are no reminiscences, unless his gorgeous egotism should congratulate itself upon a clime as winterless as that of his native land, and should imagine it to have been made for him alone. And this he doubtless does, for even now he rises and utters that strident cry which I trust may yet bring his neck to the block, and walks with mincing steps away among his hens, and does it all with the

insensate grandeur that not even humanity may share with him. O, land of contrasts! San Gabriel and Los Angeles; the crumbling mission of San Juan and the obtrusive personality of a peacock.\*

Even so lately as a quarter of a century ago, there were at Capistrano extensive remains not now visible or known of. The present village is honeycombed with covered masonry aqueducts. Flumes were built across ravines on brick piers, after an ancient and substantial style now unknown. These became quarries for the moderns.

There were also a large number of books, most of which have disappeared. The church was rich in gold and silver vessels and ornaments, which were among the first articles to be found wanting.

The Franciscans, here and elsewhere, took, when they went, everything portable that was theirs, or that could be turned into money, without robbing the parish of anything coming under that species of property. Their successors do not seem to have been, some of them, even so conscientious as this. The great wealth and splendor of the old times have thus been turned into a tawdriness and squalor that is striking.

There was also at Capistrano a quarter of a century ago four or five times the population of the present. It was the stronghold of old customs and old ideas; one of the last in California. What has become of these no one pretends to state in detail. The American civilization has swept as with a besom. Only the strongest survive it. This passing away is one of the interesting California studies.

The church was deprived temporarily of its character before it became a parish ruin. Bonsard, a pirate, with his crew once occupied it for three days, while priests and neophytes took refuge in the willows of Trabuco creek, and waited until his debauch upon mission beef and wine was over. The same thing happened at Santa Barbara and Monterey.

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## **CHAPTER VI. THE PEOPLE OF THE ADOBE.**

## BETWEEN NEW AND OLD:—A CORNER IN LOS ANGELES.

A DISTINCT class of odors, sensations and impressions hang about every Spanish-American town. Whether in New Mexico or California, they are so much the same, so nearly alike, that they would be recognizable to a blind man who had once learned to distinguish them. Yet it is difficult to describe them with any hope of conveying a correct idea of what they are to him who covers all points with the undoubtedly true statement that a town is a collection of human habitations, and a city a bigger one, and there rests.

One of the strongest individualities on earth is the Spanish. A man who never changes himself, he impresses himself upon all his surroundings if they are of his own beginning. It is not that he is strong, for he is entirely and invariably unable to resist, in this country, the ideas and encroachments of the Saxon. He avoids, when he possibly can, the pain attendant upon the parturition of a new idea. The things he knows he knows nationally, and his very individuality is a national one. It is thus that amid all the newness of American life he retains his adobe corner unimpaired, alone, apart, separate, individualized. It is so in Santa Fé or Albuquerque, in Las Vegas or El Paso, and so also in the obscure nook he still retains in the beautiful city which is, except in name, the very antipode of everything Spanish; in Los Angeles itself.

Perhaps it is in the mere brown fact of adobe alone, yet adobe is one of his few acquired ideas which has become second nature. But it necessitates the thick walls, the small windows, the low doors, the single stories, the long porches, the sunken floors, always and everywhere generally characteristic of Spanish-American occupation. The sturdy structures stand almost forever, and when abandoned by intention, sink back to earth again only with the passage of the centuries, and leave at last a long, low mound that will still proclaim a human use, still declare the nationality of him who made it regardless of all points of the compass and the symmetry of squares, convenient to a goat-path in front and a corral behind, and who lived in it as one does whose life might have originated the idea that has made immortal the masterpiece of Payne.

Whoever would understand aught of those by-gone days which placed on this continent the quaintness of Spanish peasant life, must come quickly if he wishes to judge by that surest index, the homes of the people. For the day of adobe occupation has gone by. A rumbling tile factory and a yard of sun-dried bricks do not exist long side by side. The age of cut stone and the age of dried mud do not pull along together. The street that has a cable car-line is not now much traversed by strings of laden donkeys. Only here and there is there a corner left, and, as an intermediary, the slant-eyed celestial has largely possessed himself of that, and Hop Sing and Yung Lee have hung upon the ancient walls their various signs of lavatory industry. And this is the strangest thing of all; a wonder conspicuously left out of all the prophecies; that the inheritor of the hidalgo should be the peasant of Peking or Macao. And, after the Chinaman, they are laid waste by time, or tumbled by spadefuls into carts, and the Spaniard and his belongings have said *adios* forever. Nobody knows what he thinks about it, and no complaints have been recorded. The closest questioning will not elicit his opinion or air his grievance. The dignity of his famous race upholds him while all around him goes on the sequestration of his inheritance and the spoliation of his country. For so it must seem to him. The process he can neither prevent nor understand, is the contrivance of a people even to whose tongue he is a stranger, and to one of Spanish blood there can be nothing more foreign and incomprehensible than that American life to whose most natural processes he has become a victim.

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But while here and there an adobe yet stands back of the street front in Santa Barbara, or down by the old renovated and replastered sub-mission in Los Angeles, or in some obscure nook in a mountain valley where once was the outpost of a cattle-ranch, or roofless and tenantless in the shadow of a mission church, or as the home of contented poverty in the midst of a village garden, let us regard them as the indices of those days that were present only forty years ago, and which are now so far in a remote past that the amateur antiquarian has already begun to delve in them and misunderstand them. One of these brown or intensely whitewashed structures standing alone is an architectural widow whose loneliness one must respect, but where two or three are gathered together the cluster at once begins to have a character. And, to begin with, sunshine and adobes go together. There must be lights and shadows, and open doors, and a continual going in and coming

out. Such a house with the door closed seems blind, and deaf and dumb as well. It is a place which lacks all newness, and which has always that air of use and occupation which makes it human. Somebody is always there, and always at leisure, and invariably producing the impression that time is not an object worthy of particular attention. Perhaps it is a store, and has “*Tienda*” somewhere displayed upon its frontage. But, if so, the proprietor is not engaged, and has no anxiety about customers and sales, and sits content upon a box and smokes cigarettes, and does not advertise. But if it be a dwelling, there is always a woman there with a shawl over her head, and a black-eyed child clinging to her skirts. The chances are largely in favor of a half-dozen others. A childless adobe I have never seen.

Here, and in New and Old Mexico as well, there is a sign of nationality which may almost be regarded as a talisman. It is a string of red peppers. Where, strung upon a thread it hangs not upon the outer wall, there is something unquestionably wrong with the interior. For pepper, and not garlic, is the sauce of life with the Spanish-American, and a more harmless dissipation it would be hard to find. “*Chile*,” or “*chile con carne*,” comforts every simple life, and such lives are often drawn out to a good old age.

Save where some American has adopted the material and fashioned himself therefrom a house, I do not remember ever to have seen a new adobe. Perhaps the Spaniard is, in his turn, of the opinion that he never saw an old American house, but, at least, that air of age and use he carries with him wherever he goes is inexplicable and indescribable. All his domestic belongings partake of it. His fence is old. The path beside his door is worn, and the step of his threshold seems to have been trodden by the feet of generations. The street in front of him may be clean, but it has the indescribable semblance of bearing the debris of centuries. And there is a sensation that does not arise to the decided character of an aroma, which nevertheless belongs in that list. It may be of the fuel he burns, mesquite or cedar, or a mingling of his cookery with the atmosphere, or his national smell. The Indian has it, but his is distinct and of a flavor anciently oleaginous. The emigrant-car possesses it, and it stays after the occupants have raised the first fruits off of preëmpted land, and therewith purchased tickets for the remainder of their families to come over with. Every occupation has it as a trade-mark, and every nationality carries it as an unconscious inheritance. It

has naught to do with cleanliness necessarily, and the American nose may with impunity only refer to it as one of the sensations of the Spanish occupancy, dim and faint, but there.

The cot and the palace of old California were alike of sun-dried bricks, and from them come indifferently the *vaquero* and the millionaire. San Francisco started so, and Los Angeles still shows some of her beginnings, and old San Diego is little else. Sometimes the huge brown building rambled over an acre of ground, and was the clustering place of a host of dependents or the headquarters of a provincial community. American statesmanship has been notoriously nurtured in log houses, and all that was good or strong in California came out of these thick, brown walls. And there was such strength, mingled perhaps with a goodness which Americans do not appreciate, and which has long passed from human judgment and criticism. They were practically an unarmed and pastoral people, taken by surprise in an outlying province, and unsupported by a near or respectable government. Nobody cares now, not even the Spaniards, how California was won, and all the little battle-fields have perhaps been planted in oranges or their localities lost. They could not read fate, and there was nothing else to read. They did not know of the enormous odds against them, or understand that conspiracy of the centuries against all things Spanish. They were not even that organized militia which is the ineffective show of defense. There was no arsenal save the family powder-horn; there were no arms but antiquated fowling pieces

#### THE OLD GATE OF THE GARDEN.

and disabled blunderbusses. No Californian could walk, or would, and they displayed only a force of free riders, armed with the *riata*, or the home-made lance. Yet they did fight. Nineteen men at San Pascual out of twenty-three were killed with thrusts. I know where there is a rust-eaten marine cutlas<sup>104</sup> which was picked up from where it had lain for a quarter of a century or more on the hills east of San Pedro. Some wandering bull has set his hoof upon the grip and broken it, and the dew has eaten deep scars into the blade. The national honor does not require, I think, that it should be denied that this old knife is the memento of a retreat which, though of no great moment considering the final result, at least actually occurred. The men of the adobe, like those of the cabin and the clearing, have invariably been dangerous when aroused. In this case the wonder is that they awoke at all, for, hating Americans as they might, and as they are reputed still to do, they could

have no devoted love for Mexico. A political and ecclesiastical orphan such as California was must make her own way.

As a specimen of the abnormal development of some of these children of the adobe, did the reader ever hear of one Flores? It is not a pleasant or poetical reminiscence, for Flores merely showed one of the most ancient forms of Spanish wickedness. He was a bandit, and terrorized a goodly portion of South California as late as 1858. It was from his followers that Capistrano once withstood a siege. Nobody knew when to look for him or where. Commanding admiration after the old fashion of all times and countries, he had many friends, and it seems finally to have become a question of exterminating him or conceding the fact of his being the actual ruler of the country.

Going from Los Angeles to San Juan, a friend called my attention to a clump of trees growing in a low place in a wide stretch of ranch-land. "There," he said, "is the place where Flores ambushed and killed the Sheriff of Los Angeles county and his whole posse save one man."

I had not heard the story, nor would its details, or many glimpses of the life and adventures of the California bandit, probably interest the reader. But we had gone but a few miles further when another feature of the mountain landscape attracted my companion's attention and produced the sequel. It was a countryman of Flores' and his vaqueros, and not the American civil authorities, who were alone useful in bringing the hero to his untimely end, and the man who did it was the principal figure, on the Californian side, of the battle of San Pascual; Don Andreas Pico.

Perhaps there were never two men who more perfectly illustrated the inherited types of old Spain than the man Flores and his mortal foe and final exterminator, Pico, bearing in mind the somewhat vivid distinction that the one was a professional murderer and the other a gentleman. The enmity was not an actual or personal one, but grew out of the two opposing views of citizenship and law, and outlawry and plunder. The old Californian was such a man as comes to the front in emergencies with that certain and untrained instinct of the soldier common to the caballero, and which enabled an adventurer to conquer Mexico and an unlettered goatherd to lay waste Peru. A vaquero by training and life, and nothing more, he was a cavalryman by instinct, who would have been better

suited to more stirring times. The little California war was long since over and gone, its 106 victims and its enmities alike buried and forgotten for more than ten years when the Flores era locally dawned. The cowboys of San Pascual were still alive, and so was their leader, and they turned their attention to this marauding countryman.

Through the pass my friend pointed out to me they followed the gang, all one day and all the following night. The cowboys knew the mountains better than the pursued, and smiled among themselves in knowing how much further the robbers could go, and no further, on the trail they had taken. And when the *barranca* came, and there was neither crossing nor retreat, they took them all except Flores and one or two others.

Pico was a churchman. He believed in all the dicta, and wished his fellow-sinners to have all the priestly consolation necessary to secure a favorable verdict when they were beyond his jurisdiction. So he placed them under guard while he went in further pursuit, intending to take them to Los Angeles and bespeak the services of a priest, ere he should hang them. But when he returned he found that some of them had escaped, and therefore he forget about the priest and the hereafter, and strung all the remainder, a riata to each, upon the nearest sizeable tree, and he and his vaqueros rode home again righteously content.

A compatriot and neighbor of Pico's has been referred to in another chapter, who was also a characteristic product of the adobe community. He talked. He could neither read nor write, but had he possessed these accomplishments he would have used 107 innumerable reams of paper, and assisted greatly in that official pen-and-ink garrulity for which his race is famous. His friends would have done the fighting and he would have made the treaties, and probably making this mutual imaginary concession, they got on very well in the same region in hum-drum daily on very well in the same region in hum-drum daily life. This last was also a caballero, perhaps an unconscious one, and born a whole age too late. Having no education to begin with he proceeded to acquire one, and took an early opportunity of hiring a talented wanderer through the country to teach him to form his distinguished autograph, with a *rubrica*. Thereafter the signing of his name was an important ceremony. He would say “*Usted quiere mi firma?*” and when books and all other impedimenta had

been duly carried away and the document spread before him, he would look upon it with a Quixotic frown, insert his goose-quill in the fatal fluid, and go through the whole of the “education” upon which he prided himself, with three quiddles, a long understroke and two dots, and the fateful deed was done. It was entirely a mechanical accomplishment, for which he had paid the man who taught it to him a hundred heifer calves. This unimportant incident in a provincial life may perhaps hardly amuse the reader who has little idea of the Spanish character, or who has read Cervantes but for the story of the infatuated Knight of La Mancha.

The original cowboy is a Californian and a nurseling of the adobe, and all his imitations are comparatively feeble. And that also is in the race. The word *caballero* means nothing more than one who 108 rides, but it has meant “gentleman” for six hundred years. Here is one who, without much use of hyperbole, may be said to have been born on horseback, and to have cantered as his last act. His style of horsemanship is one born of necessity and long habit, and is totally distinct from that of the schools. But all the real hard riding of America is done after his unconscious fashion; a fashion acquired only in

#### MISSION BUILT OF ADOBE.

youth, and impossible in ordinary life. One may see him even in these degenerate days, wherever there are cattle on the hills, or a rambling ranch-house lingers superfluous in the land of booms. Wherever he is, he will not walk, and even his going to bed is but an unnatural waddle. Every day, all day, summer and winter, he is but a part of a horse. And yet he is not an imposing centaur. He will “stay” for endless miles; he is tireless in a proverbially hard life; but either his “technique” is bad or the rules are 109 wrong. He sways in the saddle; his reins are often held in the wrong hand; his stirrup-straps are too long; he mounts quickly but awkwardly; he uses his heels; he “flaps” his elbows; when really on business he raises his bridle-hand as high as his chin, and leans forward, and perhaps does everything he should not do. But he would ride an English hunting-field to death, and, give him horses enough, would be the finest light cavalryman the world ever saw.

And even now he is perpetually armed—not with anything the reader thinks of as a weapon, but with the *riata*. This lissome coil of plaited rawhide, or of twisted black and white horse-hair, hangs

always at his saddle-bow. The implement seems never to have been Spanish, and was not imported. It is comparatively modern, for it would be almost useless without a horse, and there was a time in America when horses were not. The Indians did not have it, so far as mentioned by any investigator, and it is altogether *sui generis*, a cowboy's, a vaquero's, thing.

It sometimes misses fire, so to speak, of course. So does everything else. But it is sure enough and strong enough to catch and control the oldest bull or the newest calf of the herd, and to outwit and tangle any creature over whom its loop may fall. It has an effective range of thirty to sixty feet, and the throwing of it is simply a “knack,” obtained by practice and from natural aptitude, but one in which all members of the clan of vaqueros are more or less efficient. Swung in wide circles obliquely round the head, when let go it passes through the air with a singing sound not pleasant overhead to the creature at whom it is cast, and there seems to be little use in attempting to “dodge” the flying loop. Were I to attempt the entertainment of the reader by stories of its efficiency, well authenticated, they would simply be relegated to the extensive limbo of Western “yarns.” But its use is now universal over the whole unfenced Southwest. It, and not the fateful tool of Colonel Colt, or of Colonel Bowie, is the chiefest implement of that intermediate civilization which may be worse than none, but which is the ordained predecessor of the school-house and the plow. Sometimes it remains even a little later. Major Ringgold, in command of his battery, was dragged from his horse with a Mexican *riata* and killed, in the heat of battle. The last lynching but one in eastern Kansas was practically done by a mob of one mounted man, who flung his coil over the criminal's head, and executed him by riding off with him. The progress of fires in Western villages has been repeatedly arrested by “roping” the projecting timbers of half-burned structures by a skillful cast, and pulling them down. When a wild steer runs a muck through the streets of Chicago, as has not infrequently occurred, the fusillade of the police has little effect, and the man longed for is he who regards the whole occurrence as quite a natural one—for a Texas steer—and who coolly proceeds to “rope” him and induce him to return and be killed professionally, and for the general good.

Of near kinship with the *riata* is another; that peculiar piece of equestrian architecture known these forty years as the “California Saddle.” For it is to the pommel of this that the subtle line is attached,

111 and it must be strong. In comparison with this structure, with what contempt must the flat English riding-pad be regarded; “fit for a pacin’ hoss and an old man,” one of my Texan friends once told me. Take a frame whose elaborate “lines” are comparable only with those spoken of in naval architecture; brace the arches with riveted iron; plate and strengthen it wherever possible; cover this frame with thong-sewed raw-hide, fitting without a crease, and let it dry and shrink there; then cover again more or less with carved and embossed leather; rim the round “horn,” as big as a tea-plate, with silver, and fringe and tassel and plate it wherever possible; hang the huge wooden stirrups with their hoods and shields; furnish it with a woven hair “cinch” that will stand any strain; be sure that not a buckle occurs anywhere in its organization; and you have some of the chiefest features of the saddle that has gone from the Californian *vaquero* over half a continent. When the broncho has it on he feels that it is there to stay, and since he may lie down and roll in it only to his own disappointment, he has for generations ceased to do so. It is open in the middle from end to end, and his high backbone, the contradictory thing about a broncho which makes one think he was not built to be ridden when he is not good for anything else, is never galled. It is as hard as wood in the seat, and it is the rider's person that must be cushioned and not the saddle. The blacksmith will hold and hammer an iron bar which you would drop. The cook in your kitchen dabbles with impunity in the same water with which she removes the hair from the back 112 of your neighbor's pointer when he becomes too frequent in her domain. The Mexican peasant, reared amid a thousand varieties of cacti, has the foot of a pachyderm and a hand that plucks the red *tuna* with its million microscopic barbs. So in the *vaquero* and the cowboy, and mayhap the hardened cavalryman, the callouses of kindly nature are interspersed as are those of the palm of your hand.

South California in a state of nature is a land of nooks and corners, infinitely more beautiful than any improvement has made them since. In these nooks the original Spaniard seems very generally to have nestled. When he did each one was an unintended corner of Arcadia with an adobe house in the middle. To say it is the land of flowers is but to repeat an item from an immense literature purely American in its origin, and devoted to a delineation of the attractions of described tracts of it. But it truly is, and of all lovers of flowers perhaps the Spanish peasant woman is the most devoted. Visit her at this late time in her California career, in her little brown house, with its

little brown garden studded with bloom, and when you go away she will give you a flower. To her it has a certain value you may not perceive, and it is a gift—a “friendship's offering” the significance of which these heartless times have almost obliterated. There is only one variety of native dwelling in all this country that has not its bloom, and that is that most desolate and womanless of human abiding-places, a sheep-herder's shelter.

I know a gentleman who, besides the designation already given him, is an Irishman, a soldier and a 113 bachelor, who was with me once in the yard lying about a little village adobe, as usual a place of flowers. When we were going away, and had reached the rickety little whitewashed gate, a child came and gave us each a bunch of flowers. “Now you see,” said he, explanatorily, “these people love such things. That poor woman would carry water a mile in an *olla* to make them grow.” Thereupon he went back and told her how to cure the sickness of her big grapevine, and how pretty the flowers were, and I, a clumsy stranger, knew nothing better than to explore the depths for convenient small coinage for the child, after the usual American fashion.

They tell us unanimously, and alas! history bears them out, that the Spaniard is cold, cruel, revengeful. For my small part I may only answer that his womankind have borne and trained him as ours have us, and that not in all rural California, or in rural Mexico either, will one find, even to the washerwoman at the brink of the acequia, aught but ladyship and gentle courtesy. It is not merely training, and there is a dignity of race for which neither the Spaniard nor his peasant mother will ever be equaled. The races do not quite make each other out. Ours is dominant, but the Chinaman may overreach us in the end. The adobe people have seen the end, and their poor contentment in what was theirs is gone. Yet the courtesy and simplicity remain, and from it, if from nothing greater, might we obtain some idea of social life in the California of the old times.

It was pastoral and almost patriarchal to a degree never attained elsewhere in America, and never to be 114 seen again. A *ranchero* thinks he works hard, and regards himself as one of the toilers of the earth. He was under that impression in the old times, but it is only a shepherd's idea. For his day included rest, laughter, perhaps the dance. There was no winter, and there was not in any land where a national merriment, a race festiveness, ever existed as an unartificial thing. If I made

a comprehensive map of the United States, I should mark off this remote corner with a red circle, as being the only spot on the continent where, even under peculiar conditions, the people had ever danced in the afternoon, or it had never at some time snowed in the old-fashioned way.

All that we now see was absent. There was not a fence, other than that which enclosed a garden or a corral, in all the land. Very small area was occupied, and, save the nooks and shady corners mentioned the country was a green or a yellow wilderness, asleep in the sunshine. To journey was to ride, not upon roads, but paths; not in wheeled carriages, but on horseback. There were no mails, and a horseman carried tidings from rancho to rancho, or they who came and went were the chroniclers of the times. The book, as we know it, the serial publication, printing itself, were all unknown. No diarist or scribbler, no childish private impressionist, ever passed that way, and the present writer is sorry they never did. All these things were as unthought-of as they were in Mesopotamia, and would have been as useless, and this while in Europe the day of the pamphleteer was at its prime, and Franklin, on this same continent was making Poor Richard's *Almanack*, and Mother Spain was stirred by heretical 115 opinions, and the triumphant day of the daily newspaper had dawned in sister colonies that were not so rich or old as this. There were no schools. The wealthy ranchman hired a person who could read and write to teach his sons, and the daughters came by embroidery how they might, and by dancing traditionally, and these were all they should know. There were no doctors, and women, after the fashion

#### OLD ADOBE WALLS.

of knightly times that seem to us very old indeed, were surgeons—the setters of broken bones, the healers of contusions, the staunchers of blood. Women doctors are a very old institution, and they practised in California while the question as to whether they could or should be doctors was being first discussed from the allopathic view-point. So far as known even the Spanish lawyer, the toughest of his clan, had not made his appearance amid this innocence. The Alcade may sometimes have been a 116 *licenciado*, or he may have had upon his sign the word “Abogado.” There are reasons purely circumstantial, and growing out of real estate transactions, which render this conclusion tenable.

As all these prominent things were absent in the Californian Arcadia, so were others which were not so necessary. There were, of course, no fashions, and here would have been the place to find truly, at a date about the same as that of the battle of New Orleans, how the dames of Southern Europe dressed themselves when New Orleans was founded. There was nothing of what we call trade; there was only industry. Every necessity of life was made where the raw material grew, as it had been fifty years before by our own great-grandparents, and as it still was to some extent. The rancho, to the Californian the capital of social life, contained everything, made everything. There was a chapel there, and sometimes even a priest. There were tailors and shoemakers and smiths. There was a mill and a tannery, and a cemetery often enough to supply every reasonable demand. The products were rude, but they served, and when anything was wanting they supplied it with rawhide, and if in haste, with the hair on and wet with the natural juices of the animal it had covered. This singular material found a place everywhere. Every coupling or cross-beam was bound with it, the handle of everything was tied on with it, the stock of every old blunderbuss in the province was wrapped with it. It never came loose. Old doors are swinging yet whose rawhide hinges 117 first began to bend half a century ago. Rawhide was to every Californian second nature.

All human experience seems to indicate that the nearer a community comes to these simplicities the happier it is, and it is a fact that the manhood that has rocked the world has oftenest sprung from such surroundings. The most charming pictures of Saxon life are those of the gay green wood. Priestcraft chiefly rules in the crowded centers of civilization. The groves were God's first temples. Mountains have been the nursing mothers of both patriotism and poetry. The fatherland of these people is a mountain country, and whoever has overrun Spain has found that the entire population rose up behind him unconquered when he had passed. All that was here was natural to Spaniards, and they were not complaining. It would be yet. No railway would ever have been built, or mountain path made practicable for wheels, or uplands redeemed from the desert. For to this hour are those things true of the mother land, upon whose head lie the centuries. The old Californian, farmer or friar, was a poetic anachronism, as are all Spaniards, charming, simple, Arcadian, but now out of place in the awful country where ten years make a century, and beside the

terrible people who laugh at saints because they have never had any, and scoff at miracles because they perform them themselves.

The Spanish woman, wherever in all sunny lands her lord has borne her, has maintained, even more entirely than he, the peculiarities of her race, and these have been marked and striking for centuries. 118 She is a follower of custom and a conservative for whom no equal is known; a stickler for *costumbre del pais* who knows no relenting; a believer in all that ever was, who knows no shadow of turning. She is a frivolous being who is yet solemn and penitent; a dancer of the *zapatero* who is yet the best friend of the priest; a tinkler of guitars, who nevertheless goes to mass every day. It was this Spanish woman who kept away from old California all the features of our frontier, and who caused it to be from the beginning a custom-regulated and precedent-governed community. These features were absent here, and it is the only case on North American soil in which, under similar circumstances, they were. She reared her sons not as frontiersmen, but as Spaniards; and her daughters not as the awkward and unkempt slaves of circumstance and toil, but as the women of all their generations. It has been said that no difference is to be noted between the women or the houses of Lima and those of Seville, and there are no later appearances to indicate that she of the California valley was ever aught more or less than the woman she would have been on an olive-covered hillside in old Spain. In utter isolation, with a thousand untrodden leagues intervening between her and all her sisters; with nothing but unconscious custom and unlearned tradition to support her; the Spanish woman of California still wore the rebosa and the comb; still fancied the yellow silk and the falling lace; still had roses in her cheeks and her hair; still danced, sang, laughed, prayed, wept with an inconsistency that made her consistent; still knew as 119 much and as little; still clung to her idioms and her lisps, her traditional fears and constitutional proclivities; was still beautiful at sixteen, fat at thirty and lean and cronish at fifty.

In all reminiscences of the times of the adobe, one does but go over and over again the characteristics of a wonderful race whose character is almost as changeless as that face that has looked across the Lybian sands for five thousand years. No man has suffered more vicissitudes than the Spaniard has; no man has had his national heart oftener broken; but, also, no man has so changelessly maintained himself amid varying and strange surroundings, and in the very midst and

presence of his successors. The Mestizo, the mixed man, in New or old Mexico, or in California, takes to the Spanish side, and speaks the Spanish tongue, and believes in the Spanish faith. And this singular power of impressing himself, of leaving himself as a memento, exists in line with a list of failures such as are hardly to be set down to the credit of any other people. To all there is of him, practically, north of the isthmus of Darien, we may begin now to say a quavering *adios hasta nunca*. But of his isms and ideas and beliefs, of his wonderful personality, of his perfect tongue, we shall not be quit until a time so far in the future that we need not contemplate it.

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## CHAPTER VII. THE OLD AND THE NEW.

### THE FIRST SETTLER.

SOMETHING has been said in a former chapter of connection with what they did or were apt to do, and they have been alluded to not only as examples of missionary zeal, fortitude and success, but as notably correct in their judgment of the proper and necessary surroundings of such success.

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Without any study of the record or particular knowledge of the past of California, and seeing their country with themselves left out, the only glimpse one catches of the Padres now might fairly lead to almost opposite conclusions. For there is but one of the twenty-one missions they founded that is now their own, and that is no longer a mission, but a monastery. In the brightness of the sunshine, looking down on the blueness of the sea, surrounded by a town that has had a "boom," amid the continual comings and goings of total strangers not alone to them, but to the community, confronted by change and newness and all things anti-monastic, worldly, beautiful, they live the secluded life, and observe the rules of St. Francis, and are apart in the ways not only of this life, but in the path to that life which is to come.

Considering the church alone, the mission of Santa Barbara is perhaps the best-preserved of all the establishments of the original Franciscans. Seven or eight of the brethren are gathered here,

not as relics or remainders of the toilsome and eventful past, but simply as friars of their order, pursuing their own way to the final exchange from brown to white, content and uncomplaining, let us suppose, with the temporal fate that has befallen their order in these days, with no Indians to convert, no holy joy to experience in the acquisition of souls or lands, no difficulties to overcome but those that arise in the inner man, no sacrifices to make but those that lie within their vows.

The inevitable first impression in visiting the place of these good men must be one produced by 122 the sense of contrast and incongruity. They perhaps do not know or care as much about the story of their great order in California as the visitor does. They were not left behind in the sorrowful exodus of the sequestration, and are as indifferent to the influences and meanings of the unparalleled conquest of their brethren as are the pages upon which these words are printed. Nor are they in the least affected by the fact that the results of that conquest have gone by with the fact, or that the end, from the view-point they must naturally assume, is more sorrowful than the beginning was discouraging. Mendicants by rule, as naturally insecure in their expectancies as a faith-hospital, they must here support themselves in a largely Protestant community, and must do it without any of the opportunities their brethren had, and even without those of other men. The vineyard and the tannery, the mill and the tallow-cauldron, are no longer theirs. Their strange idea of what a holy life consists in is essentially a mediæval one, without sympathy in these times. They are no longer left even the boon of silence. Business, the prevailing idea of the century, surrounds them. They can not avoid it. The grocer's man brings them patent-roller flour in a rattling wagon, and comes away and bangs the ancient door behind him, and at the end of the month the bill doubtless reads like any other house-holder's; so much for so much. In the old days at San Diego they once so far lapsed as to sometimes ride in the huge and shrieking carts to and from the fields, and thereupon the carts were burned and the forgetful did penance. In Santa Barbara they ride 123 in the street cars. Thus has the genius of modern common sense conspired against a holiness that is of the past, and thus does evolution militate against rule, and this is the end, the sloping and attenuated end, of the days and accomplishments of the Franciscans of California.

#### FRANCISCANS OF SANTA BARBARA.

Perhaps they do not care, for in the nature of the case it would seem that a monk, at least one deprived of the stimulus of some expected result, would scarcely care for anything. They must suppose that some others must be saved besides themselves, else they could not be missionaries, and if so, the iron rule of monasticism is not essential. But for all forgetfulness of men, and entire obliteration of their own records, they have duly provided. All the generations of them who have lived at Santa Barbara sleep indiscriminately together, unmarked and unlamented, in a crypt beneath the church-floor. When it is full, if it should ever be, the bones that have lain longest are taken away, and room is made for the latest clay. There are no records of any deeds: a monk can do no deeds. Junipero Serra himself, and even St. Francis his great father, obtained their posthumous appreciation at the hands of the people of the world. Serra is not even conceded to have been other than all his brethren were. His name is not in the calendar. He was mourned when he died, and his grave has perhaps been discovered at Monterey, and some of the children of this world have done him due reverence, and that is all.

These seven or eight Franciscans see every day, and possibly become accustomed to it, those things which cause the merest Protestant stranger to stop and think. The gray old building stands on a little knoll in the valley now covered at its seaward end by the town of Santa Barbara, and which extends with many a convolution back among the hills. The place is one of the most beautiful in the world, with a singular suggestion, but for the lack of snow-peaks, of a second Switzerland; —a tropical eidolon of what has been described in thousands of enthusiastic pages, and of what all the world has gone again and again to see. Just beyond the building, and unseen until one almost enters it, is a narrow valley full of trees, down which runs a stream. High up toward the source of this the Padres begun their first enterprise, and along the hill and down its slope lies the cement conduit which brought them water as cool and clear as a trout-stream. The reservoir in which they caught it is there still, as sound as when it was made about 1786, and the iron pipe which now brings the water lies near the original one of the missionaries.

In the side of the reservoir, which has a look of solidity not possessed by any modern structure, there was a sliding wooden gate. Only the square opening is there now, out of which the water

poured to turn the mill-wheel; the building and sluice for which, but not the wheel, are there yet. Interest in these sound and lasting mementos of ecclesiastical industry can hardly prevent reflection upon the economy and acuteness of the arrangement. This water was wanted for irrigation and domestic uses, but it did not hurt it any to turn a wheel first. Therefore a “turn” of water on the garden and fields made it also grinding day, saved the cost and labor of a dam, and the “going to mill” up the valley in an Indian country.

Buildings, some of which are so sound that they could be used again, are strewn thickly about on this little point of land. They are of even more than the usual solidity of mission constructions, and were certainly built without any premonition of the end of their uses after so brief a period as about fifty years. For there was much to do at Santa Barbara. There are said to have been some thirteen tribes about there, all of differing dialects and tribal customs and notions, and each to the other as the Jews were to the Samaritans. They assumed each for himself the distinction of a separate people, and must have had at first but faint idea of the unity that is in the Gospel. There are no tribes now; not 126 the semblance or traditions or remains of a single one. The mission water-works, the mission mill, the cracked mission bells and this group of Padres, who have only their own salvation to look after, and who knew them not, have outlasted them all.

Sometimes one sees in one of the characteristic publications of modern California a cut entitled “A Mission Garden,” and thence one would infer that these bowers are common. There may be two or three, and one of them is here. Undoubtedly it is much abbreviated in modern times, being but a small square as compared with that at Capistrano or San Luis Rey, and of no importance save as compared with the beautiful wilderness which surrounded it when it was bigger. The wonder is that it is here at all. Tadmor is not, practically, more a ruin, or more forsaken, than three-fourths of the missions are. There is a sense in which all are so, for they are mementos of a past of only a hundred years ago, yet a past so unlike the now that the Athenian Acropolis is quite as recent.

But this little mission garden, still blooming, has one peculiarity not common to gardens—a woman has never entered it, nor will she until still another past has gone upon the record, and the walls are like those of San Luis and Capistrano and Santa Ynez. The glimpse from the tower is

the nearest approach, and that she may have and usually will not. For this monastic deprivation she has no satisfaction save that the opposite sex may not visit convents. Yet on this very day at Santa Barbara had she her feminine revenge. There must have been other visitors about 127 the venerable premises, for in a very narrow place the friar who conducted us found one of those willow contrivances with wheels which is the property of the youngest member of every respectable family. He was forced to the unwonted task of trundling it out of the way, and as he did so she, merely said, with a glance at the cowl and gown, but a face seraphic in its innocence, "It's the last place in the world I'd expect to find a baby-carriage in!"

He was an Irishman, and she his unknown countrywoman. If for a moment there came into his eye a twinkle of the days before he was a monk, it passed again, and an exchange of humanities was not continued. I trust I may be pardoned for the opinion that, to a son of Erin, *all* a monk's deprivations may not consist in an observance of the vows of his order. He is not so unnatural in his robe and cowl and shaven crown as not to wish sometimes to reply to a civil remark. Grace was given him on this occasion, and if he wanted to say, "It's only just the *wagon*, mum," as I thought he would have done, I trust he has found comfort in his conscience.

A pathetic mixture of the old and the new; of ancient quaintness with modern ideas, exists whenever a mission has been repaired. For nobody now can imitate the indescribable style in which everything in the old days seems to have been done. This, which is so alluded to for want of any better term, is not describable in words. There is an Indianesque suggestion in the most elaborate and the most substantial of it which declares it to be the European plan and direction, the intention of a taste that had 128 known the ideals of sacred architecture, and of the masonry that was old when Rome became the capital of Christianity, but built by the barbarian hand. Put back the fallen stones of this; repair it by modern

#### CONTEMPLATION.

means; and you have the most undesirable of combinations. At Santa Barbara a new reservoir stands beside the old and dry one of the Padres, practically in the same spot, and fed by the same source, and not greatly larger. Close by the church are handsome modern houses. There is a new

ceiling, rather than which one would prefer to risk an occasional bit of falling mortar. Yet they have left it alone wherever possible, and time may partially heal again the scars of incongruous repair. There is no high pulpit now, the timbers that held it having crumbled in dry decay. Not so as yet the very practical and artistic emblems of mortality 129 that adorn the outer frame of the door that opens into a cemetery that has been delved over and over. These are human skulls, with crossed thigh-bones beneath them, inserted in the stucco so that they seem to have been carved there in high relief. If not artistic they are most effective, and have long grinned there upon the sadness that comes to all, and with more effective meaning than all the urns and texts and weeping angels that beautify decay in a less realistic age.

Even the long tank upon whose sloping rim the Indians washed their clothes is there, and has been replastered too, and is full of water. The figure out of whose mouth the water pours looks precisely like the animal idea of the Pueblos, and is probably the savage notion of a bear, life-size. But no more Indians will ever come again to make lavish expenditure of the mission soap upon the sloping stucco, and it is but a monumental keepsake of the old times.

What infinite pains must have been expended in their day upon the mission bells. I do not know where the oldest are, or the sweetest, but one of these square towers is full of them, and one with edges thin and jagged, says, in a circular inscription whereof the name is not remembered, “—— made me in 1876.” Another has a text in characters so jagged, and with Vs for Us, that it would require an antiquarian to read it. Among the necessary things sent to California by the first ships that came were seven church bells. They were things indispensable. They carried some of them whenever they went to establish a new mission, and hung them to 130 the low branches of live-oaks and awoke the barbaric \* silences with their clangor.

There are California artists of no mean ability. Why does not some one of them turn his genius to “The Ringing of the Bells,” and give the world an artist’s vision of the sunny wilderness, the surprised barbarian and the heroic Padre of a hundred years ago?

Afterwards they came from time to time, until there were more than a hundred of them ringing at the various missions, always in groups, but without any regard to tune or tone. It was a long journey, and a slow one. Cadiz or Barcelona to Havana, Havana to Vera Cruz, Vera Cruz around

the Horn to San Diego, and thence up the coast or across the country painfully. Doubtless the imperishable bronze of hundreds more of them rests in the ooze of the deep sea bottom, having gone down in the innumerable wrecks of those times. Yet Mexico is full of them, and the slow ox-teams of still slower times carried still more of them from Vera Cruz to Santa Fé, and to Taos and Tucson and El Paso, and all the villages of the Rio Grande. Even Texas had them, and they rang a *repique*, a mistaken one, when the slaughter of the Alamo condemned their chimes to foreign ears over a region greater than all Europe, and forever. With the crudest skill they hung them where they are ringing yet, and their tones are those of a requiem wherever heard.

As to these, there is no other reason why they should be heard. The worshipers are few or none, and the masses are said to walls, and the Stations of the Cross, and the echoing floors. No scene can more vividly recall the recollection of former days than the Sunday vespers, when there is not an Indian 131 face where once were hundreds. All the church has now, after her great success, are in the cemetery asleep. Yet as changelessly imperturbable as the ages through which she has passed she goes right on. Time and the world, and death, and change, do not affect her, and she stands alone in her capacity for patient waiting till her time shall come again, and all men shall be gathered unto her. Here at Santa Barbara, Virgin and Martyr, the blue clouds of incense have risen for more than a hundred years about her image. The hearts she was made to impress are dust. A town, an American city, has grown up around her shrine and bears her name. All things that were not intended have come, and all that were hoped for are gone. A handful of monks, strangers to her sponsors, and anachronisms, still hover about her and will sleep beneath her feet at last. They are mementos of a time so far upon the verge that not a thing on earth, and not a thought, is as it was when the little Italian town sent forth their founder and his followers. Yet those are not further off, nor more incongruous, than the more recent ones whose hopes and prayers were centered here. One may perchance visit a ruin merely, and then forget it, but one does not forget the living reminders of a ruin that is not alone of chapels, or mission-lands, or sequestration, but of an era.

“THERE are days when everything goes wrong.”

The beldame who made this remark to me, among a rambling assortment of others, gave me the impression of being what I have taken the liberty of calling her not so much from actual senility as from intention. But she was old enough to be at entire liberty to use any form of speech she chose to a stranger whom she had never before seen, and whom she must travel far to ever see again. I was at the moment inclined to her belief in the matter of common philosophy she was an advocate of, for various petty reasons, one of which was that I was bored.

For the sun shone with Californian fervor on the hills lying about San Diego, and upon them all there was not a tree where one could remove his relentless hat, and sit upon a dusty boulder, and gratify himself with a demonstration of the axiom that in California the sun is always hot and the shade is always cool. The light brown dust, fine as wheaten flour, covered my shoes and seemed to have penetrated to the inside. It had not rained much ever, and here not at all since the end of the season locally known as Winter, and all the innumerable stones, and the gravelly concrete on which they rested—that deceptive Macadam which needs only to be wet to become as fruitful as the Delta of the Nile—gave me the 133 impression of containing not a drop of moisture down to the center of the earth. The brown lizards my footsteps startled glared at me with ridiculous malignity, with beady, lidless eyes, and glided away. The dusty green bushes caught at me as I passed; big enough to walk around, small enough to be absolutely shadowless. A lazy little tepid wind blew from the South, fanning nothing into coolness, and deceptive in intention. Below me lay the long, shining scythe which I knew was the Bay, and beside it, thick and metropolitan in the center, and dwindling away into flecks and patches on the hillsides, lay the town. Beyond all was the shining silver endlessness of the Pacific, asleep under a covering of haze, ending without horizon in a gray-blue sky.

Why I had come there I do not precisely know. I was not looking for lot investment. It is a poor country that will not afford the privilege of a stroll without exacting a repentance. Others had been there before me, for long furrows had been ploughed on some of the slopes, and earth had been removed with a scraper, and posts and boards announced that this was Such-and-Such an Avenue.

At other places stood the pine business cards of the firms who dealt in real estate, and at still others “Snap Bargains” were announced. Before me, erected so that all might know, was an announcement in large letters that “This Tract,—by—feet, is RESERVED for the erection of the FINEST HOTEL in Southern California.” So it was; there was no disputing it, and I passed on.

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The antipode of all this I encountered in the old woman whom I have mentioned, and who uttered the bit of ancient philosophy I have quoted, and in mongrel Spanish which helped to allay the saltiness of its flavor. I asked for a little water, and she said “*Ah, no hay agua aqui ninguno,*” and I abandoned the unreasonable desire, satisfied if I opened a flow of conversation instead, which I did.

The place of her habitation had attracted me from a considerable distance by its air of abject wretchedness. I knew what I should find there; the gypsyish semi-civilized Indians who are the brethren of those who were in the missions, who wander hither from that long, dry, prickly tongue which is the peninsula of California, and who know not why they come. I call this tattered abode of barbarian poverty a place for convenience, and a habitation for no better reason. It was at the end of a little steep ravine which opened into a still wider one, and it had been rudely curtained with dilapidated gunny-sacks fastened upon sticks. The crone sat upon the ground, stirring some heterogeneousness with one hand in a battered pan, while the other lay listless across her knee. A little fire smoked lazily in a hole. A boy of twelve sat in the shadow and blinked at me. They slept in the sand, and ate upon it, and breathed it, and mingled with a little water they must have drank it for most of their lives. They were like all their forefathers of the earth.

She did not invite me to enter, or bid me be seated, for obvious reasons, and I availed myself of a little ragged shade and seated myself on the ground, and her natural suspicion was doubtless disarmed somewhat at the sound of such Spanish as I knew. For all these Indians, so far as I know, speak that tongue, and are inheritors of the influence of that people. Even these were not entirely Indians. They wore, after a ragged and cast-off fashion, the garments of civilization, and had the general

## MISSION INDIANS OF TODAY.

demeanor of those who have tasted improvement without having fully partaken of it.

I asked her if she was inclined to think it warm, and she answered that it was rather so; not very.

“Where did you come from?”

“*Abajo*;—below.

“Are you alone?”

Then she broke forth into lamentations. The *burro* was gone; her man was hunting for him; he had been gone two days; and looking sorrowfully upon the ground from beneath raised eyebrows, and shaking her head slowly from side to side as people do who submit patiently to unmeasured affliction which is not deserved, she made the remark I have mentioned: “*Hay dias en que ninguna cosa sale bien.*”

In various forms, meaning the same thing, it is undoubtedly a Spanish proverb, and not an Indian idea. Therefore, I inquired when she had learned the tongue. Her answer was to hold her hand, palm downward, about a foot from the ground, as everybody does when it becomes necessary to say “ever since I was so high,” or words to that effect.

“Have you been here always?”

She answered that she had always been in the country, in various places.

“And how old are you?”

She did not know, “but I was here when the Americanos came. I was like that boy;” pointing to the youth, who had never removed his eyes from me since my advent.

“Well, who came?”

She answered that there were ships, and soldiers, “*alla abajo*,” pointing to the bay, “*y alla tambien en el ceree'yo*,” pointing toward the distant hill where lies the old earthwork called Fort Stockton.

This was ancient history too modern. She was not beginning at my beginnings, and, meaning no harm, I wished her something like a hundred and ten years old. Musing upon the question of how to begin to find out if she could tell me anything of a still earlier time, she took her innings by suddenly asking me:

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“*Es Usted Padre?*”

So she imagined that I, too, might be a missionary, and necessarily a clergyman. I do not know how many things I may have been taken for in the course of my life and wanderings, but the idea of being in holy orders was at least new to me.

But the subject was broached, and I asked her if she remembered the Padres of the old times. She said she only knew of them through her *parientes*; her relatives. These, she said, had not lived at the mission of San Diego, but had worked on a rancho of the mission; an outlying field or pasturage. This, to her mind, seemed to constitute a claim to distinction and consideration, and was a reminiscence that had dwelt with her during more than half a lifetime of wretchedness and squalor, though such wretchedness had been the natural condition of her race until the Franciscans came, and since their departure had again been as from the beginning. For an elderly Indian woman she might not have been hideous but for the intention they all seem to have of being so if possible. I had a vague idea that if she were elsewhere, and some one would wash her, and comb her hair, and give her a new cotton gown, and place her in a chair, I should like to hear her story.

I heard it anyhow, for it was a narrative. Indians, barbarians of all lands, seem to lack the power of personal reminiscence. If it is a tradition, a legend, a tribal history, it passes from tongue to tongue through dusky generations. It was told in a Spanish as bad as my own, and with a badness new to me. Some of her phrases I could not understand, and she had that 138 geographical nomenclature of

the country doubtless current and exact with her people, but unknown to modern description. I give it as I got it, or, rather, as I conceive it to have been.

“Something very new happened to my great-grandmother,” she said. “She was gathering acorns on the hillside, some one of these I suppose, when the ship of the Spaniards came into the bay and sailed into the shallow water up there;” and she pointed in the direction of what is called False Bay. “She fancied at first it was a big white goose; bigger than was ever seen; but there were men upon it, and she lay down amongst the bushes and waited to see what they had come to do. Presently a canoe came ashore with men in it, and she ran home to the hut.”

“Then the Indians came and watched them from among the bushes, and they built a house there, and every night the smoke arose and the fire glowed. This was the beginning.”

“Then some of the people crept nearer and nearer, and at last it became known that they were men, such as the very old ones said they had heard had been here before, and they had hurt nothing. My people could have killed them, but it was thought that they were not like us, and that they had powers that were far-reaching, and they waited for them to go away again.”

“But time passed and they did not go. Another ship came, and also other men from the South, and the Indians grew more accustomed to them. They were but men, for they died and were buried, and when my people knew this they grew more familiar. 139 We did not know what they came for, but they talked, and were friendly, and were not any longer feared. Only the women did not go to them. They gathered acorns, and heard what others told, and staid at home.”

“Time passed. Perhaps it was a year, or two years. It is long ago, and I never heard. But one day my great-grandmother was on the hill amongst the little oaks. By that time the bells rang every day, and these Spaniards went about over the country, and talked with the people, and asked them to come with them, and gave them things they had never seen before. You may think it strange, but up to that time the Indians had never seen so much as a knife to cut with. And while my relative was there among the acorn-bushes a man came, and when he saw her he stopped to look, and she ran away. But when on another day she was on the hills he came again, and again she ran, and this happened

many times, he calling to her, and she running away. I know perfectly well now how it was. I think she wanted him to come there, though she ran, and at last she did not run so far.”

And now came into the old woman's face a kind of reminiscent smile, and I knew she was thinking of the romance of her distant relative with the stranger from over the sea.

“Well?” I remarked, inviting her to go on.

“Then she did not run one day. I suppose she only walked, and this mission soldier followed her home, and when they came to the hut together, to the little place made of bushes where they lived, her 140 family were very angry, and drove the man away. And the tribe heard of it, and were all angry.”

“And he did not get the girl?”

“Ah, no. There was trouble in the hills, and some time after that the tribes attacked the mission, and pulled down the stones, and killed a Padre and two soldiers, and went back *abajo*.”

I had heard of the one Indian attack which disturbed the days of that peaceful conquest, and was surprised to learn, for the first time, that the Gallic axiom “*Cherchez la Femme*,” would apply to this difficulty also. What I was getting may not have been good history, but it had the unwonted merit of coming from the other side. To the modern Californian there may exist other very good reasons for not believing it, since the days for making a *casus belli* of the fate of a squaw are long since passed. But it is a fact that prior to the touch of civilization every Indian community, of every race and tribe, has had its most jealous care in the guardianship of its women. To their rule in this regard the Mosaic law was mild, and death did not wait for proof, but followed suspicion. Chastity was originally the one barbarian virtue alike of Apache and “Digger.”

But it was not a pretty ending to an incipient romance. The old woman went on to say that that tribe never did come back, and that a long time; *muy largo tiempo*; passed before any of her people would have anything to do with the Franciscans or their missions. Many other tribes had similar

feelings. It is an acknowledged fact that, at the time of the sequestration, there were thousands of dusky 141 wanderers among these hills whom the gospel had never reached, and for whom the missionaries had long ceased to care. They knew all about the new civilization, and had been accustomed to see it from a distance for more than a generation, but the ineradicable “Digger” remained in them. The shelter of rushes or boughs, the hole in the sand, the diet of hornedtoads, bugs, snakes and gophers, and liberty, appeared

NO GOSPEL THEN OR NOW.

to them the better part to the last. This old woman, dwelling under her flapping shelter, utterly miserable to any civilized understanding, occupied a place between. She knew, yet had not tasted. In such a shelter was she born, and amid such surroundings had always lived. She was a California Indian. This was life to her, almost worse than the life of the old times, but the only one she knew. The doom of the heathen who reject had come to her in this life. The last remainder of a multitude, she was here amid 142 the gradings of inchoate avenues and the signs and inducements of the real-estate industry, a “Digger” still, and with all this she thought that some days were worse than others.

I asked her if she had not some other story to tell me; one that would end better; and she shook her head. “Where do you live when you are at home?” I inquired. She waved her hand and answered—“*En todas partes*”—everywhere

“Have your people no place—no country?”

“No. Sometimes it is better here, sometimes there. There is here more clothing, and there more fish. I do not understand the Americans and their towns, or where they all come from, or why they come. Neither do I the others who came first—the Spaniards. Perhaps there was not enough in their country, and they came to find better. Perhaps it is so with you. You took this land away from them, they took it from us. Will somebody come and take it from you?”

For one moment the vision of a Mongolian seizure; of hordes and swarms of yellow faces; of serried battalions wearing pigtails, passed before my mind. Then I said, "No; no one is coming after us; no people can take anything from the Americans; they *always* stay."

And to this she answered, in the words and tone disagreeably familiar to every one who knows the tongue or the Spanish people, "*Quien sabe?*" When it comes to that classic remark there is no longer any use of discussing the question then in hand, whether it be of a transaction in horseflesh or of national 143 policy. This miserable semi-savage memento had her opinions, drawn from natural sources. The question was like that of a child, whom one can not convince against his conclusion that what has happened once will happen again.

Across the ravine from where we sat there was a yellow embankment, and a somewhat dilapidated railway track. I asked her if the trains passed there.

"Sometimes."

"What makes it go?"

"I don't know. Perhaps it is the white people's Devil."

"What is the wire for overhead?"

"I don't know. To catch birds?" inquiringly.

I was convinced then that this dusky prophetess was a subject for whom a more patient missionary than I would be necessary. It was Apache-like; the universal Indian; to see a miracle every day; perhaps to vaguely wonder; but never to enquire, never to try to understand. I changed the subject again to her own affairs, and asked her if her people had a chief.

"No."

"Then who governs?"

“The man;” meaning of course the universal masculine.

“What becomes of your sons?”

“Sometimes they work. When there is no work they sleep.”

“Have you any house?”

“Yes,—this.”

“And when it rains?”

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“Then,” laughing, “we are very wet. But it will not rain soon.”

“What do you do with your daughters?”

“Well, they are like other women; just women; they go.”

“What has become of all the Indians?”

“Some of us have gone to the desert. Most are dead.”

“Of what?”

“Of a disease the Americans brought; this,”—and she showed with apparent satisfaction some ancient marks of small-pox on her wrist.

“And they died of that; all, and in so short a time?”

“*Mira hombre!*”—look here, man—she said, as her voice grew shriller; “One gets it; he can't see”—bringing her eyelids together with her thumb and finger—“He can't hear”—putting her fingers in her ears—“he is all sick”—making dots over her face and arms with her finger-end—“he don't

know anything”—tapping her forehead. “There is no cure. He dies. One after the other goes. All who know him die. This year there are a hundred. Next year not one.”

The crone was describing in a few words the fate of the California Indian. She conveyed to me the impression that she considered it the incurable curse brought by my people, and purposely. She understood no more of it, of its cause and cure, of all that we consider its history, than she did of why the railway track was laid, or the whispering wire was 145 stretched overhead. She classed it with those diabolical contrivances. It happened that during all the years of the missions there was no small-pox, or, if there was, the cases were isolated and the curse suppressed. Therefore, with all other mysterious things, we also brought this, and it wrought havoc amid these endless hills. Perhaps it matters very little what they may think, but it is the universal accusation against us in the helpless savage mind. They make no history, not even the history told by bones and piles of stone, but if they did, the story would go down to dusky posterity that we killed our predecessors with charms and a curse.

To understand the savage rightly it is necessary to know that he does not appreciate you. I was not making any impression upon this old woman. Had what she really knew been capable of being arranged in her own mind, she could have told me all I wished to know. I do not pretend to the reader that the sketch is worth making except to emphasize the fact that all that is good in civilization is bad to all but the civilized. I had here before me, seated on the ground and speaking a tongue I could understand, the three periods of the history of the coast: the Digger, the Franciscan and the American. The last-comer was I, face to face with the first, and, in a sense, with all that had gone between. Lacking the stolid face and the stupid stare, more than usually intelligent, perhaps, to her all the past was yet as a page torn out. The half-dollar I gave her opened a new era, and her day was perfect when a gray and shambling Indian made his appearance, not with a donkey, but 146 with an old gray horse. “*Ya ha benido*,” she said; “I knew something would happen when you came.”

What had happened was more to her than all that was gone; a companion for the endless misery and squalor which she considered life; the pitiable beast of burden who shared the savage lot, and a

silver half-dollar. When I arose to go I asked her if she thought this was really one of the days when everything went wrong. For the first time she laughed, and in the middle of her brown face, and between those uncomely lips, I saw the glistening rows of white and perfect teeth which are nature's almost only gift of comeliness to the aborigine of California.

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## **CHAPTER IX. SOME "ARGONAUTS."**

### **BEFORE THE RAILWAYS.**

SOME twenty years ago it occurred to one of the most brilliant and indolent geniuses this country has produced to bestow a generic title, a classic name, upon that remarkable body of men who were the first Americans to truly know California. Those were golden days, and their coming was not in vain. For then, and almost only then, did the placer yield for a body of hopeful adventurers a yellow store that could be known by sight as Gold. No capital was required; nothing but a pick, a shovel, a pan, a "cradle," "grub" and pluck. This last quality acquired among them the name of "sand," and they had it, and in many cases it was all they had. But 148 by it they acquired, in connection with that which they came for, the name of Argonauts, which in a sense, they truly were.

Most of them were young when they came, and only those who were yet survive. Nearly all, sooner or later, returned to "the States" and to a course of life not unusual, and have long since more than half forgotten all the wisdom of those times, applicable only to them and their circumstances, and confined to the Pacific coast exclusively. Many a deacon in good standing now was not so then. Many an one who might have been so if he had stayed at home, had his chances for being thus distinguished spoiled by an experience now impossible in any corner of the world.

To some, perhaps to most, who remained in California, was reserved a destiny of which they were not, and are not now, entirely conscious. They rarely or never married, but this not extraordinary circumstance must be taken in connection with another; that in the nature of the case they have, all their lives almost, lacked the subtle influence of woman. Mountain and wood and stream, and other

men, have been their companions, and now at sixty they are what is termed “peculiar”; oddities; semi-misanthropic; lacking faith in the very axioms of life; not governed by the experience which is almost the common inheritance of the race. Wherever they finally go they are singularly inclined to live alone, and to make their own beds, and do their own cooking and washing, and they care not in what solitary nook the one-room house they call home is placed.

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And these veterans of the old time, these Argonautic relics, are not disposed to shun association with their fellow-men. They want it, and like it, but they take it curiously. A thousand common ideas and experiences are new to them, and, indeed, the very commonest are the newest. An ordinary fatuity is to wish to do all those things now—except marry—which a man should do only in his youth, if at all, and to make themselves ridiculous by those performances which are expected only of boys. They *are* boys—with gray beards and decrepitude to call especial attention to an incongruous fact. Only one other class of men bears any comparison with them in this respect, and that is the briny mariner who has sailed the wide world over, who has visited every clime, and who comes ashore at last without having touched the bottom of anything except the bottom of his vessel, on sea or land; a man whose experiences are only wide, not deep, and whose beliefs, doctrines and superstitions, stuck to with the tenacity of a barnacle, amuse his fellow-mortals as long as he lives.

More or less so perhaps is the rare ascetic, monk, clergyman or college-professor, whose life, once common, can now only be lived by a rare being here and there to whom the world is nothing. The precise opposite of all such, Argonaut, sailor or scholar, is that man whom the times have developed into an unequalled radiance, and whom we know, even without an introduction, as the Commercial Traveller.

Take a nook in California where three or four of these ancient miners have chosen to reside, and their pranks are almost surely an unfailing amusement of 150 the community. They live apart, each one by himself, and the hotel, or the boarding-house, knows them not. They are nearly all “heeled.” That is a phrase of Argonautical invention which saves tedious explanation, which means in Texas that one is armed, and in California that he has money. To this man a solitary blanket is a bed, and

a pile of straw a luxury. He would walk across the continent if necessary, and when he had done so would walk back again if the town he had “struck” did not suit him when he got there. Easy-going and good-tempered, he is yet as ready to fight as an old bear, and with as entire a recklessness as to consequences. And you never can tell when he is going to begin. Silent usually, when he meets a man he knew in the old times his garrulity is grotesque. Yet he will rarely talk of those times, and his answers to your questions are merely tantalizing. For his idea of them is not yours, nor Mr. Bret Harte's either, and they seem to be accompanied in his mind with tinges of regret, not that they are gone, but that they ever came. So the story of early California, a wonderful one too, remains very largely untold. Part of it would be that of men of your own race, whose motives and feelings you can understand, whose sweethearts, or mothers, or mayhap whose wives, lived for thirty years and more after they came away, and they never saw them again, and do not perhaps now know whether they are living or dead. Part of it would be of years of unceasing but purely experimental toil, solitary in the river-bed or on the mountain side, hopeful ever; tempted from day to day; a failure at last. Part would be of the 151 failures of inexperienced and luckily-gotten wealth, gone in a day or a year, and gained in vain. Many an Argonaut has these things to carry about, concealed in the inner consciousness of one who never had a home, or reared a child, or knew a sister, or repaid the tears or cares of her who bore him. They also are part of the “romance” of early California, believed in by all who yet linger, and to be added to the oddities and crudities, the whims and notions and mistakes which are conscious possessions; the ineffaceable results of life in a womanless world.

In some cases society has grown up around these old fellows in very late years, and surprised them with its vagaries. In such a case they are inclined to get together beneath some spreading tree where nobody can hear them, and take counsel in regard to its necessities. As likely as not they may then employ a dancing-master, or order blue velvet suits for a projected masquerade, or do both, quite regardless of all expense. Having once attended a ball, this man will fancy that the way to do it is to do it all, and proceed to acquire what he considers the inevitable intricacies of the Highland Fling, the Double-shuffle, the endless varieties of the professional dancer, and all under the impression that these are what one should know if he dances at all. Yet he will never acquire the figure of a contra-dance as long as he lives, and hangs up the delicate fabrics of his masquerading caprice in a

closet constructed for them alone, wondering why they should seem awkward upon him alone of all the giddy multitude.

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Sometimes he fancies that he has neglected his musical education, and having lately heard or seen something which has had the effect of starting him in that direction, he concludes that he will apply himself. Thereupon he orders from some Eastern manufacturer all the pieces necessary for a “brass” band. Then he and his cronies proceed to “practice,” first without a teacher and then with one, making night hideous for their fellow-citizens as long as the whim lasts them, or until public clamor forces them to take to the fastnesses of nature with their horns.

Ceasing at last from want of wind, or inability to master a score no less difficult to an aged beginner than Greek would be, or from the refusal of their lips to acquire that little horny callous on the inner side which is necessary to every horn-blower, our Argonaut never sees the real difficulty, but imagines the instruments to be imperfect or the assortment incomplete, and thereupon orders a banjo as the one remaining thing. Perhaps it is from a private conclusion he has arrived at that anybody can play a banjo, even the universal incompetent he has always been in the habit of referring to briefly as a “nigger,” and he is going to come out master of something.

The tribulations incident to brass horns may be largely borne in private, but with the dance company is necessary. It is urgent that the feminine portion of the community should become interested, and that a teacher of the graceful should be hired to make his presence felt at the district school-house at least once a week. Our Argonaut being willing to furnish the money, one portion of this program is easy. It is the 153 “wimmin” that puzzle his well-meaning understanding. The duennas who own the pretty Spanish girls “play it low down on him” by alleging that while they may manage to see their maidens usually well

AN ARGONAUT.

shod, — *muy bien calzado*, as they express it, —they can not pecuniarily endure the well-known wear and tear incident to fantastic trippings on the schoolhouse floor. Unless somebody furnishes the boots they can't go next Friday night, and the maiden says as much, regretfully but firmly.

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This one can not be spared, nor that one, because they dance by nature, and so gracefully that the Argonaut wonders what is the matter with *him* and *his* legs. So he says that if that is all he will see that she has the boots, and gives her an order on the store. Very soon the arrangement, having been quickly grasped by the feminine community and their mothers, becomes so common that, to save trouble and do the thing systematically, he has these shoe-orders printed, and they become almost negotiable paper in the community. Every girl has a new pair of boots from an assortment running remarkably small in the sizes, and the feminine support is continued upon the preposterous hypothesis that she does not really wish to dance, but is willing to do so as an accommodation to the Argonaut if he will stand the wear and tear.

Having accomplished so much, and so very easily, the Duennas seem to have cast about them for another scheme whereby they might profit, and there is a strong disposition in attempting to describe it, to lapse into homely idioms, and to quote the memorable instance of him who, having for once the opportunity to take as much as he wanted of plug or pie—precisely which of the two not being mentioned in the narrative or essential to the moral—proceeded to excise considerably more than he could masticate. In going about to find out if there would probably be a good attendance at the next visit of the dancing-master, one demure damsel said she really did not think she could go, and yet would not state why. Two or three more acted likewise, and again the fate of the enterprise seemed trembling in the balance. The Argonaut was forced to inquire among the male members 155 of the community whether they, or any of them, could tell him what was again the matter with the “wimmin.” Yes, one of them could. The matter was that these girls would not dance unless they looked real nice, and in order that they might, it was alleged to be necessary that some of them at least should have a new and more accurately-fitting one of those garments

whose purpose is to make other garments fit, and which is alluded to in feminine serials as the corsage. Dolores wanted a new one.

“And what the blank is a corset?” exclaims the miner, “and what have I got to do with them?”

And thereupon he abandons for aye the whole capricious and precarious enterprise. If he ever dances again, it will be as he used to dance in the mines; with considerable inelegance, and with a piece of his red shirt tied to one arm to designate the sexes.

But it is not always in the line of the fine arts and frivolity that the Forty-niner exercises his public spirit. Having no child of his own, and privately considering his life largely misspent in that he has not, it is very characteristic of him to develop an unusual interest in the public-school system. If the treasury is temporarily vacuous, he goes into the depths and produces sufficient money to tide over the difficulty. He is interested in the library, and buys books for it, and makes the most extraordinary selections of them ever known. He wants banners, and what he considers emblematic devices and mottoes, to hang upon the school-house walls. He would put a globe three feet in diameter on each gate-post, and on this globe he would delineate in high colors the 156 seas and continents of the world. A favorite scheme, perhaps, is to occupy the whole of one inside gable-end with a gilt colossal eagle, and under the fierce bird to emblazon fourteen stars; thirteen ordinary ones and one big one—a “blazer,” he remarks—for California. And under all this he would say: “The Poorest Child may tread the Classic Halls of Yore.” Then he thinks the school-house would be about right, with all its appurtenances and belongings. Curiously enough, he meets opposition in these views from his fellow-members of the Board, and when he does he incontinently abandons his educational projects and turns his attention to some other enterprise, bringing to bear upon it in turn his remarkable ideas of what should be.

The reader will say: “But I myself know returned Californians, and they are not like this.” They probably are not; the fact is readily conceded. But those who returned at all did so while still young, and their Californian experience is to them as the four years of the great civil war are to the veteran; a hiatus; so much practically left out. But it is an experience. Neither the war of secession nor

the early days of California left their participants the same as their fellows are. They think and believe differently, though perhaps privately, upon a hundred subjects. Both were experiences rare, extraordinary, and impossible of repetition, and are now portions of a life apart from that of a new generation in a thousand particulars.

But he who stayed, who adopted for a life-time the ways he found in vogue in his youth in a State 157 unique in all its periods and in everything, is often, if not always, the character so far attempted to be described. Any one who will place himself among the scenes of those days may have a more or less vivid idea of the processes of his education. The mountains lie imperturbable on every hand, ethereal in the blue haze of the afternoon, and the valleys glow in the sunshine. The old red roads wind away among the hills, often now grown across with coarse herbage and having the air of melancholy the deserted pathways of men wear all over the world. The round hills are spiked with stumps where once the red-wood grew, and a new growth of azalea and alder and sumach strives to hide the scars and gashes made by the pick and shovel of forty years ago. Old flumes have rotted and fallen, and still lie strewn in the ravines across which they once carried so many miner's inches of water every day, and poured it into a hundred "cradles" rocking to and fro between the gravel-bank and the growing pile of "tailings." Even here and there old cabins lean and rot, mementos and remains of the strangest domesticity that ever was; the womanless and childless little homes whose people had been dropped as from the skies into this sylvan world, and who lived in them the life of a society without law, gospel or school. Old dams lie in the streams; old stage-bridges preserve still a timber here and there at either end. Sometimes the rust-eaten fangs of an ancient pick may be found among the debris at the mouth of an excavation. Perhaps at rare intervals a grizzled veteran 158 may show you where so-and-so got his pile, and half wonders that you never heard of him.

There are graves, too; dimly discernible, but still to be known as the long-ago forgotten resting-places of the stranded Argonauts, whose comrades left them to be waited for, and never to come, in the home beyond the rugged mountains and the endless plains. There are little towns, built in gulches and straggling up hill-sides, which long ago saw their last inhabitant depart, and where now no one ever comes. Their hilarious nights have not left an echo, or their reckless days a sign. Fragments of glass may tell where the saloon was, and some charred earth where was once an

hotel, and it is not possible to look at the place, and then inquire in vain for its name, and note the old road to it, and the faint straggling miner's paths that radiated from it up the hillsides, without a melancholy reflection upon the transitory nature of human schemes and ambitions, where or whatsoever they may be. This was one of the most fervid forms of American life less than forty years ago, and there are left now only the dimmest signs of it amid the mountain silence and shadows. Nature is already investing it with the signs of antiquity; with the creeping grass and growing shrubs wherewith she heals the wounds of human occupancy, and obliterates the records of human struggle and ambition, and asserts herself at last empress of all.

Every reflective man must have his moments of looking back, and his wholesome private reflections upon the theme of what an ass he has been in his time. Of these philosophers the boundless West is full, for there they who endured the most now have the least. The early wanderers over Kansas and Dakota, the men to whom every feature of hill and plain was familiar, rounded out their experiences by an entire misconception of the final uses of the vast

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expanse, and a total neglect of all opportunities. It may be slightly too strong an expression to say that the Argonaut who remained in California lives in a state of chronic surprise, but any casual observer is liable to fall into the error that he must and does. Before he came, and while he was arguing the case with his relatives, so to speak, he regarded it as the land of gold. After he had reached the place he remained under that idea—if he could only “strike” it. The fever grew, and reached its climax, and declined, and he still thought and said that the country was good for nothing else. When the early times were gone and the gulches were deserted, and the placers had “played out,” and the “leads” had “petered,” and his chances were gone, he awoke slowly to the fact that California was not the land of gold at all, and that the real wealth was in the soil. The “greeny” and the “tenderfoot,” knowing from the Argonautic standpoint nothing at all, came and seized upon the opportunities he had neglected, and filled up the country he had expected to see almost deserted. They diverted his flumes and ditches wherever they could, and turned the sage-brush and chapparal

into fields and farms. It was not *El Dorado*, but a peach orchard; not the country of “camps,” but of towns; not of wild oats of either the natural or artificial variety, but of vineyards and orchards.

And as time passed the deception grew worse and worse. The “desert” put in its claims. The country which the Argonaut never visited; the edge of that yellow-and-gray expanse that had killed of thirst and dust and hunger so many of his companions who only tried to hasten across it; began also to bloom. Cities sprang up beside a miserable ditch, embowered in tropical foliage, and containing more inhabitants than all the Argonauts ever numbered. The waste and lonesome acres began to have a value greater than they would have had if they had been staked off as mining claims. People came in greater numbers, and with more enthusiasm, and possessed of considerably more money, than were seen by any of the golden years succeeding the historic 'Forty-nine. At first the old Californian calmly awaited the miserable failure of all this wildness, and knew as one does who has had experience that the world had to a considerable extent gone crazy, and counseled with his few remaining fellows as to the signs of the times. It is not to be denied that sometimes he also partook of the benefits accruing, in cases where for a quarter of a century or more he had been the owner of lands he never really wanted, and hillsides that came to him by chance. Where he drifted into South California, because there was nowhere else to go, or for some similar reason, he often awoke to find himself upon a “pocket” very late in life.

Go where one will on the Pacific slope, at long intervals widely scattered, here and there, will be found this grizzled memento of the old days. Perhaps it may be sitting on a bench in the shade in the neighborhood of the old Plaza at San Francisco, and there he will refer to the metropolis as “this town,” and generally speak of it to you as to one who must of course readily recall the time when it was a little place, as he does. Or you may find him in a chair in the rotunda of the Palace Hotel; a man with a wide slouch hat, a splendid gray beard, and a look of prosperity. If one does not insist, and he be in the humor, he will amuse you for half an hour with desultory talk of those times whose annals have entered into the folk-lore of America. Perhaps most prominent to his mind is that great day when the last spike was driven, and the first trans-continental line was finished across the wide expanse to California. It was not expected, he says; it was not even dreamed of. Nobody but a phenomenally-endowed idiot would ever have conceived the project. We thought the ships

were good enough, and the little steamers that ran up and down the river. This town was a big one in them days, and things was lively; but *now*, —since then—Lordy!

Then he will laugh quietly at their crudity and oddity, and tell you a little more of “them days.” He will remark upon the enormous prices then ruling, and of how he has paid a dollar a pound for flour himself; of the Chinese and their advent; of how none of the men of those times were poor, and none really rich; of the comities and rules that governed in a country absolutely without any other law, and of the funny things that daily happened to this or that Argonaut, now asleep in one of the old graves. He tells you where the “heft” of the town was in those times, and how it looked, and ends with the remark that “we didn't have an idea of the facts in those days; not an *idea*,” and gets up and goes away at the moment when you want him the most.

So far back as the annals of his family in America go, the ancestors of the present writer were all frontiersman, and he is therefore perfectly aware of the inadequacy of this chapter, or of any chapter that ever was written, to do justice to that class which is a distinctive product of this country, and which has been 163 the vidette of all its greatness. In common with all Saxon frontiersmen, the surviving Argonaut is a man misplaced in these times, but in his day he was the true representative of that sturdy valor which is now decaying in wealth and luxury; of that courage which then regarded danger and difficulty as incidents of daily life; and of the magnanimity which comes of the sharing of a common lot. There will be no more of him while the world stands, and his name, in the country whose hills he first scarred with his toil, is overwhelmed in modern wonders.

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## CHAPTER X. NOOKS AND CORNERS.

### THE DESCENDANT OF A MISSION SOLDIER

EARLY one morning I saw coming along the village street a figure that attracted my attention without being in the least attractive; one of the commonest figures of a place that is full of ancient

oddity to the unaccustomed eye, and which is a kind of museum of those relics which pertain to the Californian past.

He was a little and dried-up man of something like 80 years. Mounted like a manikin on the back of a big white horse, he bore before him a bunch of green corn-fodder, and turned in 165 at the gate to a piece of low ground thick with walnut-trees, between the rows of which the soil was studded closely with that peculiar greenery which delights the peasant soul, and which, when finally realized upon, does not amount to any value whatever; pumpkins and peppers and onions, some spindling stalks of corn for roasting-ears, and all that miscellany which comes under the comprehensive head of “garden-sass,” and which, so far as all modern experience goes, it is cheaper to buy than to raise. His weazened face was covered with a short, grizzled beard; his head was crowned with a nondescript hat; his garments were old and clean, and he had the air of being about his business so early in the morning from a mere habit, being raised in that way and having always done so, and I conceived the idea that here, so far from his native hills, I had again encountered a kinsman of Sancho Panza, less that bodily appendage which the word “panza” is taken usually to mean.

A little later I perceived that it was going to be a busy day with Sancho. He had an ancient hoe, through the eye of which the crooked handle went too far on the back side to be convenient for use, and the edge of which was demoralized by innumerable contacts with the casual dornick. He was in the saw-grass beside the *acequia*, busily engaged in making a childish little dam of earth across it, and in expectation of the coming flood he should turn on he was barefooted. There was not any water, the riparian proprietors above having temporarily taken the liberty of cutting it off for their own uses, but he went 166 on damming just the same, and was greatly interested in coaxing the infantile current that remained through his little notch in the bank, and in making it go as far as possible for the refreshing of three pumpkin vines.

And here I beg indulgence in the tedium of remarking that the ground in question did not need any water, but rather a “cultivator” with a mule attached, and afterwards a hoe that would pass inspection. This man was but illustrating the ancient modes of Catalonia and California alike, and

showing how a country whose great interest now is in railway rates under which to find a market for an enormous surplus, was formerly scarce able to raise more than enough for the sustenance of a sparse population who in their day possessed the choice of all situations and localities, with water galore.

Later, when I went over to pay him a visit, he was inclined to receive me distantly, if politely. But when he had finished to the very lips the little brown paper cigarette with a grain and a half of tobacco in it, I gave him one of the American abominations, which are considerably bigger, and his heart warmed to me. But he did not light the one I gave him, not for the reason the reader would have in not doing so, but because he wanted to get the entire good of it. Having tucked it away in the recesses of his apparel, I am quite sure that, taken to pieces and economically administered, that same bit of Virginia long-cut-tinctured-with-paregoric lasted him two or three days.

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Sancho Panza, in California and elsewhere, always conveys to a stranger the impression of not knowing anything whatever. He is, once started, garrulous without saying anything, and loquacious after the manner of a parrot or a crow. His mind, like his life, runs round and round in a circle. Remind him of something; assert a fact; and something by way of assent or protest may result. I asked this man how old he was, and he replied that he did not know, adding the usual “*Quien sabe?*”

“Yes, you do,” I said; “you are seventy-six.”

“No. I am seventy-eight.” This without any reference to the fact of his not knowing but a moment previously.

“And you are distinctly Spanish.”

“Yes, I am a Spaniard;” with some pride, and evidently gratified at my discrimination in a matter that required no guessing at all.

“You were born here, and so was your father.”

“*Si Señor; es muy verdad;*” and the old fellow began to look as though he intended to stop hoeing for a moment.

“And your grandfather was a Mission soldier and came with the Padres.”

“It is true, that also; he was a soldier, and he came with the Franciscans. Who told you?”

“Nobody.”

And he did stop hoeing, and with his hands on his hips seemed hesitating whether or not he had better look into my antecedents as a sorcerer.

“Come,” I said, “tell me what you know about those times.”

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He removed his head-piece and began to collect his thoughts by fumbling for them in his hair. Finally getting some of the facts together, he said there were four missions—the reader knows there were twenty-one—one at San Diego, one at San Luis Rey, one at San Juan Capistrano, and the last of them at Santa Barbara. The two Fathers at Capistrano, he continued, went to all the others to say mass; they had charge of the whole business. That being about the end of his very accurate historical information, he paused, but went on scratching his head, and saying, “*Si Señor; todas,—todas.*”

The reader will understand that to every Spanish peasant his local priest is a bishop, or if he is not he ought to be, which is sufficient, and the places he has heard mentioned are practically the only ones there are, and as for the rest; well, *El Dios sabe*, and there an end.

“And about the Indians; were they many?”

“Los Indios? —eron muchos, —muchos.”

He pronounced it “*moon chos*,” thereby betraying, a hundred years after, his family origin among the peasantry of Catalonia. So I told him, at a venture but with an air of positively knowing, that his said grandfather was a Catalanian.

With still greater pride he acknowledged this statement also. Every unlettered Spaniard looks upon his province as being the chiefest one of Spain, very much as some of our forbears regarded Virginia in relation to her sister States and the world at large.

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#### AN INDIAN WHO STAID CONVERTED.

I asked him the old question: what became of all the Indians whom he himself remembered having seen. He replied at first with an expression which simply means that they were, and are not, indefinitely, but finally added that they all died. His remarks on this point were strongly in the line of a universal belief among Californians; that the Americans when they came purposely brought with them a Pandora's box which contained but one disease, but that one of sufficient malevolence to make up for all the others which that unfortunate woman let loose upon mankind. This belief will never be eradicated among the few old ones who are left to retain it. The more educated smile at this notion, but in their turn allege that the Americans “robbed” them. They do not say how, nor specifically when, and merely mean that provincial carelessness was pitted against the far-seeing wits of people who in those times did not usually come to California for their healths. It is quite noticeable that the robbery has now ceased, and that, with all the intensity of modern speculation, the later Californian is quite proof against the highwaymen who come in palace-cars.

My friend with the hoe went on with his digging, having apparently told me all he knew or had heard in the course of seventy-eight years. I give him briefly to the reader, not as a unique specimen, but as one common in all the corners of rural California. He could discern no motive in my questioning except to pass the time withal. The world was to him a thing vague, indefinite, unreal; a kingdom he never saw, an unread book. But he was not crude. The indefinable Spaniard was in his bones.

Away across the little creek there was a scattered collection of houses, placed here and there on the verge of the valley. The yellow hills lay behind them, the sun beat down upon them, and around them there was not tree or shade in a land where in ten years a fig will grow to shadow half an acre with the broad leaves from which was made the first apron a woman ever wore. But in California poverty is robbed of half its sting by a climate which renders something to eat the only actual necessity, and while the love of flowers is in the Spanish nature, a tree is too much trouble. Nearly all of Spain is a treeless country. The Spaniard has cut away the natural forest wherever he has wandered. There is a saying that the sylvan gods have in the course of ages become so angry with him that now he and a tree do not thrive in the same locality. The olive, the fruit that makes his face to shine with fatness, and the historic vine, are the only ones that cling to his waning fortunes.

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I began the day with the Catalonian peasant whose stores of varied knowledge I have imperfectly bestowed upon the reader, and now a further thirst was upon me to know more of the class the California tourist never sees. Taking all risks of being supposed to be making parochial calls, I went my way across piles of melted adobe, through dismantled doorways, among all the debris of last winter's green-ness and last generation's decay, toward the little creek whose sweet waters seemed to have sprung somewhere out of dryness, and to hurry swiftly away to suicide in the sea.

On my way I passed a little adobe where unquestionably there was an assortment of dogs. A huge and hideous tawny monster with but one eye lay basking in the sun, too old and too decrepit to pay attention. But a pert little one, a "cute" dog without a hair upon his back, came out and raised an outcry. Then an old woman appeared in the doorway and observed the situation. A single glance would convince the most skeptical that she was not an amiable old woman, but she took that little dog to task with some of the most voluptuous phrases of the Spanish tongue. "Come hither thou little thief," she said. "Hast thou no shame, to use thy tongue against a gentleman who but passes by?" Doing the best I could, I thanked her, and the little dog retreated past her within doors, receiving as he went by an adroit flip of his owner's apron which must at least have hurt his feelings.

A little further on I met in a shady lane near the stream a man who rode a horse and was leading  
172 a second. There was a muddy place, and we met on opposite sides of it. He stopped his  
cavalcade with a sudden pull, and bade me pass first. In a narrow place on the other side two  
mounted *vaqueros* had roped a cow. In almost any other locality where men catch cattle about the  
horns with a flying noose, and, indeed, where they never do, a footman may go round as best he  
can. But these two untutored gentlemen proceeded to pull the cow out of the way bodily, and wait  
until I was past the difficulty. In an instant they were gone the way I came, the cow protesting.  
One of them pulled her along without much difficulty, and I regret to add that the other seemed to  
have her by the tail, and that he offered her an inducement by twisting it gently, and with an artistic  
appreciation of the effect of caudal torsion upon the average cow's feelings.

As I came nearer one of the little houses the effect was that of a picture seen somewhere long ago  
and almost forgotten. Four people sat in a row on the edge of a little porch; a man, a woman, a  
boy and a girl. The man leaned his arms upon his knees as people do who are accustomed to seats  
without backs, and the woman's chin was in her palms. The two children had the attitudes of youth  
the world over, and the girl was a comely child. But they were not Californians, but Mexicans. No  
one who has often seen the Aztec countenance will easily forget the indescribable something which  
marks its lineaments. There is the same similarity in all Mexican faces that there is in the faces of  
Egyptian sculptures, and there is, besides, a real or imagined kinship between the 173 lineaments of  
the Egyptian and the Mexican. The last is a face that causes people to come away and say that the  
curse of God rests upon the Republic of Mexico.

A "MESTIZO."

It is an impression they have, drawn from an unknown source. The native Mexican is not a laughing  
man. A sadness dwells in the universal countenance; an inheritance, perhaps, from the old days  
of communal slavery when the Inca was lord of all; the times when the huge cylinder of carved  
granite which lies in an open court in the City of Mexico had a side of it made smoother than the  
rest by the dragging over it of bodies for human sacrifice. The native Mexican is also a man of  
greatly more ability than he has ever been given credit for. It must be remembered that he was

subjected to the demoralizing rule of Spain from the Conquest of Cortez to the year 1821, and yet recovered his country; that there are nine million Mexicans and less than two millions of Spaniards in Mexico now; that the greatest man Mexico ever produced, 174 Benito Juarez, a name venerated in the remotest mountain hamlet, was an “unmixed” Indian, and the cast of his face, resting beneath glass in the National museum, shows all the sadness which marks the universal countenance of his ancient race.

And this man and his wife were Mexicans, and I wondered how and why he came here. He told me in his first remark, and seemed unwilling to be mistaken for one of Spanish lineage. He came, as a soldier, to assist in marking out that boundary between the two countries whose homely last monument stands at the point where probably Junipero Serra first saw the harbor of San Diego. The theme started him upon his country and its ups and downs, and the subject of his profoundest hatred I found to be old General Santa Ana. He had it mostly wrong, and his accusations were not based upon the facts of the case. That man was undoubtedly bad, but he did not intentionally lose the battle of Buena Vista, or sell Texas at so much per square league, or line his private purse with California. In his vehemence this man named over to me all the territory Mexico had lost, and counted the prices on his fingers, and told me why until I felt ashamed of myself, and his woman sat and listened, and kept tally by nodding her head. He knew more than my Catalonian friend had ever heard of, and wherever he was wrong he stuck to it. But when I told him I had seen the place where Maximilian was shot the woman came closer and listened, and ejaculated “*y la pobre Carlotta*,” with a sigh. The “touch of nature” which “makes the whole kin” exists in California, and 175 in the heart of the wife of an ex-private of the Mexican army, as it does everywhere else.

Like all his class, this man was also poor. He told me sadly that he owned nothing and was a day-laborer. I tried to argue the case with him, and pointed out how he might thrive by renting the very soil he lived on. He had the usual story: “I need ploughs, and horses and seed, and where is the money to buy them?” Would that some profound philosopher would explain to me why everywhere outside the lines of Saxon blood there exists this peculiar fatalism as an attachment to poverty.

There is one exception in the grotesque personality of the remarkable man from China. California, where these others toil and starve, is his bonanza. He can not explain, for he never learns to speak the English tongue, or the Spanish either, and he is besides not a man of explanations. Alone, or in pairs, he comes creeping unheralded down the valley, and his earliest care is to see some land-proprietor. So early in the morning that the fog almost hides him, one may see him on hands and knees, creeping about between his rows, never stopping, never looking up, working always. Just opposite this Mexican, on a little piece of ground deserving only the designation of a "patch," two Chinamen have earned eighteen hundred dollars in a single year. He is not a man of conventions; he never resolves this or that; he knows nothing about the labor question; he is hated for these very negative qualities, and imposed upon and oppressed in every conceivable way, yet by steady persistence he is the uppermost man in that savage contest that nature 176 and circumstance and organized society are waging against the toil by which the world lives. One is astonished at the results of his barbarian intellect in a land where he has no friends, and looking upon him one is half converted to the theory that the whole labor agitation is a mere Utopian search for a recipe that shall enable a man to be a producer and yet not labor.

Everywhere is John, friendless yet happy. Long ago he washed over all the tailings of the Argonaut, and tied his gains so securely in a corner of his raiment that no one knows whether he or the original miner got the most. Long ago he knew every nook and corner of California, and was a feature not alone of the by-streets and alleys of the town, but of all the rural nooks. The triangular acre left to the wild mustard at the mouth of a canyon is his world, and the neglected corner cut off by the highway or the railroad, his empire. He is almost of the old times, for he came among the first and was the perpetual victim of the Argonaut. Tens of thousands have come and gone since then; a host so lacking in individuality that they seem an endless procession of automatons. He is in no sense one of the proprietors of the country, for his opinion of it is that he does not wish to own it. He is a pilgrim and a stranger, with an affection for his native land which is as unusual and unique as all his other qualities are. Everybody knows him, not as an individual, but as a Chinaman. He takes the back seats, and the sides and corners, and the alleys and the tumble-downs. The native Californian, the Mexican immigrant, the Mestizo, all look down upon him and laugh at him, 177

while he makes more money every year than they will ever see, and it is very largely his toil, and certainly not theirs, that has made the present California at which they are surprised, and which they will never understand. Presently, whenever he wants it, he will have this Mexican soldier's house, and till the ground the other is afraid of, and pay a cash rent, and go back to China wealthy.

#### A COUNTRY FAMILY.

Originally intended as the land of Nothing-to-do, rural California shows everywhere to-day the remains of that dissipated idea. Under a spreading sycamore 178 somebody is always slowly washing clothes. Upon the stony highways somebody is always walking slowly along. Wherever there is a bench a row of persons is always sitting. There are two words indispensable to life, and one of them is *todavía* —“not yet,” and the other is *mañana* —“to-morrow.” It is not that there is any intention of not doing at all; the idea is merely to wait a little, to see about it, to hasten slowly. For the same man who says “*mañana*” is capable of prolonged hardship without complaint, or of daily doing the same task over and over for fifty years. His head is idler than his hands. His few inventions are all in the domain of common life, and none of them seem traceable to a single individual. All he knows his father knew before him; all he believes is the property of the ages; all he suffers is the common lot. There was never before such a unity of purposes, opinions and ways in an entire community as exists in one of the places forgotten by the “boom.” There are no “cranks.” Every man goes without suspenders, and every woman has a shawl over her head. The scene is pleasant and the idea attractive. Except a mountain village in New Mexico, or mayhap a coast hamlet in New England, there is no other corner of America where this peace in daily life may be found. It is impossible to convey a sense of it in words. It is accompanied by a picturesqueness not only of scene, but of language and thought. There are no books here, yet the old provincial Spanish remains unchanged through the years. There are no newspapers, yet there is always something to talk about. There are no anniversaries 179 of their own, yet all the Fourths of July come and go unnoted, the one ridiculous gala-day of a people who have no church “fiestas,” and who can do no better.

From the times of Miss Hannah More and “The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,” there have been many references to “decent poverty” as a virtue. But to carry the idea to the extent of everybody being decent and everybody poor in a whole community, has not been thought of. The idea is nevertheless carried out fully among that small remainder of the old times whose destiny it probably is to see the last of their kind who shall ever live north of the Mexican boundary on this continent. It is one of the puzzles, and the Americans can no more understand such a situation than the Californian can, in his turn, understand the ways and ideas of the Saxon. There is neither luxury nor squalor, neither plenty nor want. Where so much can be obtained, so can more likewise, and the process is almost endless. It is an axiom; self-evident and indisputable. Yet you must come away from the by-ways of California knowing that it is not an axiom, and not necessarily true. One has seen no squalor, heard no complaints, been asked for no alms, and has been treated as an equal. The things he has about him have excited no envy, not even remark. Ignorance and dignity, courtesy and independence, poverty and self-respect, have been found together. You have found no woman who did not know all the rules of ladyship, and no man who wore his hat indoors. Every man or woman you have met has saluted you without either solemnity or effusion, 180 and every little boy or girl has behaved as though carefully trained in good society. Yet they have lived, in all their generations, and time immemorial, in Spain and in California, beyond the extremest verge of luxury and outside of the remotest traditions of wealth. Decency, to some others an unattainable thing even after penury has gone, is to these an inheritance, and that elderly shepherd of Miss More becomes a bit of pious tawdriness by comparison.

The time must come, and soon, when there will be no more of this. The nooks and corners where it yet abides are passing away. Names, the mellifluous names they deliberately composed when there was plenty of time to stop and say them in will remain, even though San Bernardino has become “San Berdoon,” and Los Angeles “Loss Ang,” and San Francisco submits to a hideous abbreviation which dates back to a period when the commodity of time first began to be scarce in California. Since 1821 Spain has been slowly reclaiming her own again, not from across the sea, but through the cemetery and by Plato's doctrine. In a brief twenty-five years the very nook I have in my mind

as I write has lost eight-tenths of its people, never returning and never replaced; dropping out of the unequal contest and away from the changed conditions; dead from Saxon contact; lost; gone.

This is but a little interior picture of Spanish fate and Indian fatality that may be reproduced a thousand times from the histories that cover only a hundred and ten years. The strange thing is that the 181 alleged reasons for the disappearance of the Indian are not those which entirely account for that of the Spanish-American. As for him, the few that may be included under the head of the "rising generation" are going by the shortest roads. The "saloon" compounds are his very evident passports. But all Spaniards, by immemorial custom, drink, and something in addition is also to be looked for. His race has fallen into a sleep. Repose in his surroundings, changeless custom, immemorial tradition, life in death, rest, peace, are his requirements. When I come again the old Catalanian will have ceased to irrigate his little patch, and the Mexican soldier will have joined his regiment. The singers of love-songs in the wayside saloon will have ceased, and the dogs will have lost a mistress. The whole locality will be changed and nothing but the hills, the winding valleys and eternal sunshine will seem familiar. Tradition and a Spanish name will remind the passing stranger, perhaps, that here for more than a century flourished all the quaintness of monk, soldier and peasant, and that from here departed the last days of Old California.

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## **CHAPTER XI. AN OLD DIARY.**

"THE ORIGINAL CALIFORNIAN."

THERE was among the Franciscan Friars who were at the College of San Fernando, in Mexico, awaiting preparations for the great Missionary expedition to Alta California, one named Palou. There is no telling precisely what this priest's especial education consisted in, or how it happened that it devolved upon him to become the historian of the beginnings, but he was so, and in vigorous and beautiful Spanish narrates the story of that first journey into the wilds of California in such a manner that a gentleman whose acquaintance with the region is wide and long, has told me he

could take Palou's journal and locate with reasonable certainty every camping-place of the first expedition.

But the story was not written for publication, or as history, and is tedious after the manner of the times and the Spanish fashion. Cervantes himself 183 lacked the faculty of condensation, and there are pages of insufferable tedium in every old Spanish author. Long before starting chapter after chapter is used in telling why such and such a thing was considered best; what the *Virey* thought and what intentions he had; and *mientras* this and *por supuesto* that. A man named Galvez was Virey, or viceroy, and through and by him was done everything that was done. He was a man of ability, conscience and prudence, with an enormous faculty for detail and a genius for inventories, who doubtless saw in his mind every need of a system of missions the most extensive ever planned by one man, and who pre-arranged every camping-place, and yet knew no more, nor did any of them, of the geography of the region or the character of the natives, than does a reader of this page who never saw California. Indeed, he did not know so much. No adult need now be puzzled by the problem of where to find Monterey.

The information Galvez had to go upon and make all his minute arrangements by; the data upon which he ordered equipment, money, provisions and soldiers; was contained in the record of the voyage of Vizcaino, who “surveyed” and named the Bay of San Diego only a hundred and sixty-seven years previously, had miscalculated its latitude and longitude, had mislaid the port of Monterey so seriously that the Padres could not find it, and who, with all his mariners and “pilots,” had been long beyond later explanation or recall. This is but an example of the disposition of those queer times to follow precedent and observe routine, and is, besides, pre-eminently 184 Spanish. They spent a year or two in perfecting minute arrangements for the occupation and conversion of a country they had never seen, in implicit reliance upon the word of a sailor who seldom or never went on shore, and for the sole reason that Philip, a King of Spain, had sent him, and nobody had gone with equal authority since.

They knew nothing of a matter of still greater importance—the character of the California Indians. It is certain that had these been kindred of the Iroquois or Hurons, or even of the Mojaves or Piutes,

the destruction of the expedition would only have occupied them for a matter of two or three hours. For the Spaniards were but a handful in the mountain wilderness, and their weapons were not as effective as the Indian bow-and-arrow. They carried tents and litters, and were burdened with the care of what Palou refers to as “*las bestias*” the drove of long-horned cattle which were the best things Galvez had thought of. Besides their camp-equipage, they had their church furniture,\* more bulky and more necessary perhaps than the reader imagines, and said mass every morning before starting out on the day's march.

Palou gives the following list of necessities provided and carried to San Diego:

Seven church bells; 11 small altar bells; 23 altar cloths; 5 choir-copes; 3 surplices; 4 carpets; 2 coverlets; 3 *broquettes*; 3 veils; 19 full sets of sacred vestments; 17 albs, i. e., white tunics; 10 palliums; 10 amices; 10 chasubles; 12 girdles; 6 cassocks; 18 altar-linens; 21 *purificatories*, or chalice-cloths; 1 pall-cloth; 11 pictures of the Virgin; 12 silver chalices; 1 silver goblet; 7 silver vials for sacred oil; 1 silver casket for holy wafers; 5 silver basins, or *conchas*, for baptism; 6 censers, with dishes and spoons; 12 pairs of *vinagres*, for wine and water; 1 silver cross, with pedestal; 1 box containing Jesus, Mary and Joseph; other smaller articles too numerous for mention; 29 metal candlesticks; 4 copper dipper for holy water; another list of little things; 3 statues; 2 silver “dazzlers;” 2 crowns and rings for marriages; 5 consecrated stones; 4 missals, and a continued list of stands, laces, silks, linens, etc., etc.

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A quaintness not to be conveyed by any translation pervades the minuteness of the diary of this first white man's journey in California. It was on the afternoon of the twenty-fifth of March, 1769, that the expedition started out from Villacata through the cactus, northward into the unknown. Sometimes two or three little children start to go somewhere. They have entire confidence in their ability to find the place, and know whom they shall meet, and what they shall have, when they get there. They take the world as they have found it so far, and are undaunted by difficulties they do not know of. Sometimes they really succeed in making the journey. So did these Missionaries in

reaching San Diego, and even finally Monterey, and the Providence that guided them can not have been very different from that which protects little children.

Meantime, amid all these pious desires and counselings about petty things, and looking out for bells and chalices and robes and altar-cloths, affairs of so much more moment were progressing on the opposite side of the continent that it is very doubtful, in the full light of the past, whether or not the enterprise of the Padres and the Virey affected in the least the final result as we see it now. They added an illuminated page to history, with "D. O. M." and a cross at the top, and "REQUIESCAT IN PACE" at the bottom, while the Atlantic Saxon was setting down the first lines of a long, red, momentous historic chapter. For George III. was King of England. All non-believers in the divine right will excuse the not original remark that he was a very addle-headed 186 monarch, who about these years, 1768-69-70, was unconsciously, with all the assistance he could get from his ministry, laying the pipes, so to speak, for the final floating over California, and all the rest of this continent, of a nondescript banner whose size and shape, whose azure field and stripes and stars, had not yet been dreamed of. While this cowed and helmeted company were starting out on this coast, twenty-five newspapers, mostly devoted to sedition and rebellion, were being printed and issued on the other. The tea excitement was beginning. The citizens were refusing to comply with the provisions of the "Quartering Act," and were turning out of doors the soldiers they intended to begin killing as soon as convenient afterwards. Before the hidden Monterey was finally discovered the "Boston Massacre" had occurred, and a thing the Virey never heard of, and would have contemplated with horror if he had, a "Liberty-pole," was cut down in Boston by the imported "hirelings" who might better have left it stand. While the San Carlos and her sister-ship lay in the Bay of San Diego, carrying their sacred stores and their church bells ashore, and burying their scurvy-slaughtered seamen in the yellow sand, on the opposite coast the Gaspé was being burned to the water's edge. The bells upon one coast were ringing in the advent of monarchy; those of the other were ringing it out. Mass was saying beneath tents and trees, accompanied by the noise of fire-arms, while to the same accompaniment the Puritan divine was explaining, to suit himself and his 187 hearers, the meaning of that Liberty which is in the gospel, wherewith ye are made free.

## THE MOTHER MISSION: SAN DIAGO.

Strangely enough there are in Palou's journal no exclamations of pious joy at the long-dreamed starting out of that expedition which was to bring the "gentiles" unto the light. They said mass and departed to the North-north-East, carrying with them all the water they could, and stopping the very first night only a league away, "where there was no forage for the beasts." This journey which began on March 25th, 1769, has been skillfully made the most of by very excellent and well-informed, but enthusiastic writers, but to whomsoever has chased Apaches through the mountains of New Mexico, or made the overland journey to California in the early times, there would seem nothing very appalling about it except its uncertainty, and nothing heroic except its object. It required to make it from the date 188 mentioned to the 14th day of May; fifty days; and the distance traversed, including a thousand twistings and turnings, was about six hundred miles. No cold impeded them, or rivers, or swollen streams. It rained, and even that hindered them so grievously that they waited in camp until it ceased. There is much simplicity in the chronicler's accounts of how "we were all made very wet," and "it rained so hard this night that the Señor Commandant invited me to put my bad tent under his good one," and "everything being very wet, we did not march today, but waited for our clothes to dry."

As in hundreds of journeys since made, the finding of water was the chiefest difficulty, but, so far as the record shows, not a single night was passed without sufficient for themselves, though the poor "bestias" had sometimes to wait until morning. This was the beginning of that endless record of "dry cramps" which every soldier and plainsman knows, and also of that old story of grass-and-no-water, and water-and-no-grass which have alternated with each other in endless monotony through the entire "trail" history. Sometimes they had them both in abundance, with "llanuras," and plenty of valley land, and then the chronicler, after looking the country over, sets it down in his journal that it would be "a good place for a mission." One is amused at the closeness with which the country is observed and described to this end, and with how few mistakes, and the language is such as would be used to this day by a practical man to describe a 189 situation available for farming purposes in California. In all the years that followed no missions were planted in Palou's

places. To this day his route remains almost as tenantless as it was in 1769, and only the ranchman's cattle have drunk of his streams and "pozos," and pastured upon his "llanuras" and "buenas tierras" few and far apart. But he was moved by a holy covetousness whenever he saw them. The growths he describes by Spanish names with superior aptitude and judgment, and sometimes he alights upon those "*rosas de Castilla, cargados de rosas*"—roses of Castile, burdened with flowers—which almost excite his enthusiasm. A monk and the abstruse sciences may go together with some propriety, but when he sets flowers down in his journal, not in direct connection with Mary and her month of May, one may know that he sighed as he wrote, and thought of his youth and his native land.

There is a notable difference in Palou's expressed opinions of the country as he comes further northward. The second day out, losing patience with a monotony and barrenness than which there is hardly any more oppressive in the world, he makes the oft-quoted remark that "it is a country in which nothing abounds but stones and thorns."<sup>\*</sup> It is almost the only sign of weariness in a diary that was written every day on the spot, out of a peripatetic inkhorn, and under circumstances that usually require some retrospect to give them anything like a tinge of rosiness. The 190 barrenness of the route seems then to have been largely where it is yet; south of the Mexican boundary line; and the Spaniard of a later day, with the singular fatality that accompanies him, lost most of the good and kept the bad. Even on that day when the monk tried all the afternoon to make some "Hostias;"—some wafers of flour with which to celebrate the mass—"and did not succeed in taking out a single one that was fit," he makes no remark except a reference afterwards to his *mala suerte*; his "bad luck;" and merely adds in the next day's record that they went without services that morning.

"La tierra sigue como las demas de la California, estéril, árida, falta de zacate y agua, y solo abundante de piedras y espinas."

But it is the Indian, the utterly abandoned aborigine of those times, who especially invites his attention. The journal inevitably gives the reader the impression that there were many of them. They appear almost every day, and always a new tribe, with some new variety of savage amiability or diablerie. He touches them only here and there descriptively, and manages to convey in a few words

a graphic picture of them and the nature of the souls he and his companions had come to save. Wherever at that time he had procured the word “*rancheria*,” as expressive of a congregation of Indian dwellings, he had it, and it has descended to all who have since lived where such settlements are to be found. They were encountered almost every day. Sometimes their inhabitants were inclined to be friendly, at others a little inclined to inquire at a distance the nature and character of their visitors. The expedition had with it some natives of the peninsula of California who had already been reformed at one 191 of the missions of that country; say at Muliege, a name the present writer, if the reader, would not recognize or even pronounce, had he not once had the doubtful pleasure of visiting the spot, where now remains not the remotest indication of the presence of Jesuit, Franciscan, or aborigine. These Indians grew ill. Some of them died. Some of them “*huyeron*”—ran away to join their people again, discouraged by unwonted wanderings from home—and after them, “misguided,” the reverend journalist sends his blessing, couched in terms forgiving, but probably not appreciated by the fugitives had they known them, with their views of life, friends, and the sterile homes they had known from birth. While they were sick they were carried in litters. When they died they were given the rites of the Church, and their bodies were buried in the wilderness, “and at the place of their sepulture we planted crosses.”

To all the Indians they met they gave the little conciliating presents barbarians love, and once or twice, when vaguely threatened, “*el Señor Commandante*” directed the soldiers to fire their guns, but not toward the savages. This had the effect desired of scaring them away, and the expedition proceeded.

Once in a while Palou gives his private opinion of these people, notably those seen when near their journey's end at San Diego. One aged native, he says, was found sitting on a rock by a *rancheria*, everybody else being apparently away from home. When asked to guide them, the trusting savage got up and took his bow and arrows and cheerfully went along as far as his services were needed. When dismissed with 192 presents, the reading of the narrative gives one the impression that he complacently trotted back home again, “*muy contento*,” and precisely as though he had known white men from an unknown world all his life. Several times it is noted that the men were entirely

naked, and the women nearly so. Of others that they are “Indians very lively, jokers, childish, swappers or bargainers, deceivers and thieves.”

There is sometimes a touch of Spanish humor, which, when it can be recognized by the alien at all, is the quaintest in the world. “Hardly in the proper way,” he says, “do all the men and women go about entirely naked, as was Adam in Eden before sinning, not having the least shame in presenting themselves before us without making any attempt at covering otherwise than as though the garment nature gave them was a court dress.”

He tells of their houses, which he states with the gusto of a modern Western journalist were made of hay—“*zacate*”—and how immediately afterwards they discovered that these primitive dwellings contained inhabitants who were very active and lively, and great thieves. One of them “stole from the soldiers, without anybody seeing him, some spurs and ‘sleeves’ (arm-guards made of leather which soldiers wore), and from a priest who tarried here on a feast-day and said mass, the altar-bell and his spectacles, which he hid in the ground near the altar, and which cost much work in finding again, for which reasons they called that some Indian Barabbas.”

This remarkably Indianesque specimen whose chicanery was thus embalmed in history, played his 193 pranks on “el padre presidente” himself, on the journey in search of Monterey. On such small points does history often turn, that one pauses in the reading of the quaint narrative to wonder what would have been the consequences had Father Junipero's big iron-framed “anteojos” never been found.

Of the gentiles found on still another day the reverend chronicler says: “They are very distinct from former ones, very pacific, humble and affable; during the day they were with us with as much confidence as if they had been with their own.”

DIGGER AND WIFE.

And of others still succeeding: "They are Indians quite too lively and active, great beggars and very covetous of all they see which suits them, great thieves; they are great bellowers in their manner of speech, and when they talk they speak with shouts as though they were deaf."

The predominant animals of California are referred to in almost biblical terms as "conejos" and "liebres," and one thinks first of the Psalmist's "conies" and afterwards of those gray and alert creatures doubtless as plentiful then as now, who never allow a journey to become lonesome. Whether by the term "liebres" he meant the pervading "gopher" of these days one can not precisely tell, but the pouched rodent who has 194 galleried and mined the country over and over a thousand times, and who never tires in his tunneling, must have attracted his attention. The Indian who lived far enough north sometimes made himself an imperial robe of rabbit skins. It required seventy of them to make a single garment, and they walked into the traps he set for them with a carelessness which clearly indicated the cheapness of life among the rabbits both of those times and these. Birds are also mentioned, not as important, but rather casually, and he amuses himself and the reader, by giving them Spanish familiar names, as though they could not bear others with any propriety in the presence of this expedition. Indeed, the essence of Spain lives in Palou's journal unconsciously, and he judges even the Indians he was to convert from the Spanish view-point, and evidently forgets the natural difference between the moral standards of the Indian and the white man. To the reverend Padre, these poor creatures were committing some mortal sin every day of their lives, and every hour of the day. Lying, theft, and a shrewd and yet clumsy dealing with dæmons and witches, are among the virtues of savages. Treachery and deception are boasts, and cruelty is a harmless amusement and pastime. He whom they named "Barabbas" for peccadilloes which with any other red savage would have been exchanged for murder and rapine, suffered in his reputation from an ascetic view of virtue which he never appreciated even after his conversion, if, indeed, he ever came under the influences of the gospel.

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Setting down the points which occurred to him from day to day as he journeyed through the wilderness, the author of this old diary falls under but one criticism. Unconsciously writing for the

future, he does not say enough, and his conceptions are narrowed down to his one ambition, the sublime search for souls. Now that this quest has had its day and is over and gone, now that these “gentiles” are dead and the missions abandoned to the past and decaying where they stand, one wishes that the journalist, with his command of the best resources of his beautiful mother-tongue and his clearness of perception, had not been a missionary at all, and that he had seen even more of those temporalities his brethren afterwards appreciated so well.

The diary takes the reader to San Diego, telling very briefly of the sensations and joys of reaching that haven, and producing somehow the impression that the issue had been considered a doubtful one, and that at least so much had been permanently gained; for even the ships waited for them doubtfully and they were filled with joyful surprise at seeing the ships. It is, indeed, almost impossible for the present reader to rightly understand how blind and groping were these first journeyings in California; how the most intelligent could form no conceptions of the probable happenings of the morrow; how all the sea was an enchanted waste, and all the shore was a *tierra nueva* no civilized man had ever trod. It is the contrast between then and now that adds so much historical interest to a priest's journal, and imparts a pathetic touch to early gropings in a land now so thoroughly 196 known, and so much better than the Padre dared to think it was.

After San Diego comes the part which should have been so much easier, and was in fact so much harder; the search for the port of beautiful Monterey. The wanderers could not find it, and returned suffering, sore and unsuccessful. But they discovered instead, and without any idea of its importance, the real Bay of San Francisco, and Palou doubtless set it down as “a good place for a mission.” Vizcaino or Cabrillo had never seen it, and the splendid piece of land-locked seawater, entered by its narrow gate, is for the first time certainly and authoritatively described in this diary of a monk upon whose most brilliant conceptions never dawned the dimmest dream of that which should follow the temporary and futile occupation of himself and his brethren. All the world knows now how little impression the actualities made upon either the Franciscans or their fellow-countrymen generally. For seventy-seven years no country was more entirely left alone by its owners and all the world beside, than New California. The scheme which incubated for more than a century and a half, and which was nevertheless a kind of spasm when it was put into final

effect in the expedition of which this old diary is the official record, left its political originators exhausted with the effort, and they died and did no more.

It remains yet further a historical fact that the missionaries extending after Palou and his companions in a long semi-apostolic succession for more than seventy years, specially desired thus to be let alone. 197 They loved the autocratic power of isolation, and the unquestioned spiritual dominion which has been sweet to the heart of the cleric of every sect and time. No enthusiastic and rosy descriptions seem to have been sent back to Spain through all these years. They were reserved in all their fullness for another people and a later time. Above all were heretics not wanted. No student feels obliged to accept the opinion, when it is a matter of opinion, of any one man, though it be embodied in an article in the average encyclopedia. If one did, and were inclined to go with the majority, he would readily understand that when in this ancient diary the reverend father pointed out the "good places," he had in his mind visions of the wine and oil that should flow therefrom, and the clerical happiness that should surround them. But it is not true. The toilsome journey is surrounded with every element of self-sacrificing heroism. One may smile at its difficulties in the glaring light of the present, but so he also may at the recollection of the blunders he made last night in threading the familiar intricacies of his own chamber in the dark. The first light that was shed on the Californian solitudes was from the camp-fires of this expedition of the good year 1769.

Nevertheless, the strangers came; strangers not Spaniards. As early as 1830 they began to emerge from the deserts of the East like hungry shadows. Bearded Russians drifted down from the icy solitudes which were theirs in the far Northwest. Stranded sailors touched the shore and became enamored of it. In the year which saw the last scenes of the religious 198 history of California, five thousand persons crossed the endless plains to enter a land whose rocks were not yet known to be veined and crossed with gold.

The vexed souls of the Padres may rest in peace. The act of the Mexican government was not necessary. Sequestration would have come by the eternal law of circumstances, and had they stayed the missions would have been surrounded and engulfed by alien and heretical adventurers, and five more brief years would have seen the end of the halcyon rule which has had no parallel in the

story of civilization, which illustrates the irony of fate, and which goes far toward convincing the cold and carping that he was right who said: "There are no such things as principles; there are only events. There are no such things as laws; there are only circumstances. A wise man embraces events and circumstances to shape them to his own ends." Yet to the "wise man" who rightly sees, it rather seems that Palou's old journal forms the first scant human record of a drama that was set by the Almighty upon the green hills whose destiny He knew alone.

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## **CHAPTER XII. THE ORIGINAL CALIFORNIAN.**

### **THE DIGGER's ANTIPODE:—A PUEBLO WOMAN.**

IN the Century Magazine for July, 1889, Mr. Frederic Remington contributed a chapter about Indians. In closing he allows himself to express that sentiment which is almost universal among those whose fate has led them into anything like personal acquaintance with the tribes and kindreds of the original American, and says: "I thought then that the good white men who would undertake to make Christian gentlemen and honest tillers of the soil out of this material would contract for a job to subvert the processes of nature."

In the same issue of the same magazine (see page 471) this and other opinions of Mr. Remington are duly apologized for by a writer who must have seen the article in manuscript, and who made his apology in deference to that peculiar form of public opinion which knows the American Indian for the reason that 200 it never saw him, and understands him perfectly because it is not acquainted with him, and accounts for itself and its existence by promulgating the unassailable creed that it believes "in the development of public opinion not only favorable to an award of exact justice, but in knowledge of the real character and capacity of the Indian himself," and also that "what can be done with the Indian is no longer a matter of speculation. Much has been done in education, in agriculture, in social organization, and in diffusion of the spirit, occupations and habits of civilized men."

That coterie of the unconverted which is composed of such as do not know the Indian because they are personally acquainted with him, and do not understand him because they have lived with him, await the facts, circumstantial and in detail, which should follow every such enunciation of the creeds of the philanthropists. They never get them, and are denied the pleasure of either disproving them or of personally conducting a committee of philanthropists into the fastnesses where alone they may be found, if at all, and whither the philanthropists hesitate to go by themselves, and, in fact, do not go, notwithstanding the aforesaid advancement in "the spirit, occupations, and habits of civilized men." It has been discovered that it is of very little use to visit Indians unless one comes back. The "friends of the Red Man" are anxious to do him a substantial benefit. Their way of doing it has been to "awaken public sentiment," and they have not very well succeeded except in the mistake of regarding the Pueblos as "Indians," and 201 declaring them to be examples in proof of their position. The Pueblos have not materially changed in perhaps a thousand years. It is doubtful if they are "Indians" at all. The public has for many years been asking for something more statistical and exact than either Uncas or Ramona. There was also one lone and solitary Indian saint.

#### PUEBLO GIRL.

Her name was Katherine Te-gah-Kou-i-ta, and she belonged to a tribe in its day subject remotely to the Christian amenities of the New England where most of the friends, the influential friends at least, of the Red Man and Brother have always dwelt. This saintess was so good that "she mingled dirt with all she ate:" not in the casual tribal way, but so that the viands really tasted of it to her; and thus died, half-suicide and half-martyr, yet probably only of acute inflammation of the duodenum, and the general public declines to accept her as an advanced example of either.

So far as the great body of Indians is concerned, such advancement as they have made has been brought about not by the voice of philanthropy or the action of the government, but by the simple physical fact of the disappearance of the beasts of 202 the chase, and, notably, by the extermination of the bison. They *have* advanced, for the simple mind of the child of nature has grasped in all its complexity the tergiversation that beef is beef, whether it comes from under a spotted hide or a brown and shaggy one. Corn is an old thing to them, and the squaws raise it anyway. As to staying

on his reservation, he simply don't, and only pretends to for reasons of policy. He has adopted the hoe as he did the white man's gun, because it is more effective. These, in brief, constitute his "white man's ideas." There are not so many "outbreaks" as there were, merely because he is burdened with herds of horses and cattle which he does not wish to scatter and lose, and the situation has come about without his intention, and much to his personal disgust. His education at Carlisle or Hampton ends in his re-adoption of the blanket, or, if it does not, it is time the frontiersman should be pilloried for the slanders he has been uttering in defying civilized mankind to produce a sworn roster of two dozen names of those who have graduated and yet retain the garments of their scholastic days.

There is, in some respects, an exception, and that exception is he who will be attempted to be described in this chapter. He was the Original Californian, and he has avoided all discussion as to what shall be done with him now by mostly going himself before the question had attracted other than that merely cursory public glance which is given to a crime already committed. In his prime he was unique in his savagery, and in his decay and death pathetic in his refusal of 203 the conditions which suited or were accepted by all other peoples and tribes who were independent, treaty-making powers, and yet "wards of the government." The Padres came and found him as he was originally, the "Digger," the completest savage the continent ever knew. They did not investigate him beforehand, and knew him not when they came, and had the notions of him that were then or a little earlier current in regard to all Indians. He was different from the others, very luckily for the missionaries. During the entire history of the Franciscans in California he never killed any of them but once. Their first entrance was unobstructed, and they possessed the entire land in peace. This singular white mark across the page of American history is not to be accounted for entirely by the peaceful mission of the fathers, since conquest by occupation is nevertheless conquest, and so in a brief time have all the tribes save these regarded it. They were too barbarous to have the idea of a property in the soil, too easy-going to observe continuous and gradual aggressions, and too timid to fight even among themselves, with all their numerous tribes, any other than bloodless battles of braggadocio and shouting between the lines. When rarely they did fight nobody was much hurt. They formed in two lines and made much noise, and tried to scare each other. Sometimes two

champions had a duel between the opposing forces after the manner of David and Goliath, and, honor being satisfied, both parties retired to their places and everybody went home.

204

The Spaniards had, in their turn, the usual ideas of the times above referred to, and some of these notions are curious as matters of reference. Early misconception of the Indian, not only in Europe, but by those who had full opportunity for observation on these shores was something almost grotesque. They were judged not as Indians; not as one looks upon a barbaric curiosity; but by the standards of the times. And among those standards was surely one which varied considerably from that of later times in regard to female loveliness, for it was said by some of the earliest who saw them that they were “tall, handsome, timbered people,” and that among the women were some “that while young are verie comelie”—“many pretty brunettes and spider-fingered lassies.” “Brunettes,” forsooth, and “spider-fingered” quotha. Doubtless these wilderness-saunterers had not seen a woman for so long that possibly grease-paint and strings of buckskin seemed to them like silk and the folds of ancient lace.

Meantime the Indians returned these compliments by regarding the whites of those times as supernatural beings. There seems to have been a general mutual misconception.

The general idea was that all Indians were really born white, like everybody else, and even the acute Jesuits thought their peculiar color was due to long exposure and “bear's grease.” One historian states that “all their babies are dyed with hemlock bark,” and therefore had a literal “tan,” and even William Penn gravely says that they were “dark, but by design.”

205

In those times all petty chiefs were “kings,” and the tawdry and rancid “heap big Injun” was not the fiction and humbug of these irreverent days. The reader knows that there was a question about the legality and propriety of the marriage of a girl who used to turn handsprings and stand on her head for the delectation of a frontier garrison, and known as Pocahontas, to a plain man who was only

a commoner, merely because “Poky” was a “princess.” There is somewhere in old files still to be found an official letter of those days which was addressed to “The Emperor of Canada.”

#### FROM THE PENINSULA.

Our Pilgrim Fathers had an idea that the incantations of their Medicine Men really could and did bring rain, and Roger Williams and Eliot were more or less inclined to the opinion that in them the doings of the Devil were graphically illustrated. Firmly established as they were in the idea of the wandering personality of one Satan, and they themselves being Children of Light, the Pilgrims almost universally accused these savage necromancers of some hidden connection with him whom they called “ye Devill, which entereth into ye hearts of ye unconverted.” It was an easy solution, and convenient, theologically, of the simplest and most transparent of savage humbugs. But Brainerd, 206 Champlain, Whittaker, Josslyn, Roger Williams, and others, really believed in the genuineness of the Indian witchcraft and sorcery, and that the results of them were supernatural.

All the literature of these times in regard to Indians is a display of learned folly. There was among other items, a discussion of their origin, which was returned to with tireless industry. Adam being their natural father, and white people being, as they should be, those for whose origin there was no necessity of accounting, the question was where did Indians come from, and why were they as they were. They were the children of Canaan, the son of Ham; the Lost Tribes, etc., etc., and the question that has never been settled, and which there is no great necessity for settling, agitated those grave minds severely. Those primitive days, as compared with the present, are themselves a study in evolution, as ours will undoubtedly be to the days which are to come, with only the difference that we know we do not know, while those laborious and conscientious personages were sure of themselves.

It will become necessary in the course of a few pages to refer to the actual results of the missions to these original Californians, and the reader will find upon investigation that the saddest page of the story, on both sides of the continent at the same time, has similar outlines. A very competent authority declares that “the patient heroism of the French Jesuits must always excite admiration,

but their labors for the Indian race have produced no larger or more enduring result than those of others who have 207 spent themselves in the attempt to elevate the American savages.” One of these was he who said “*Ibo et non redibo*,” and went back to death among the human beasts whom he knew he could not convert, and who he also knew would kill him with tortures indescribable. These Jesuits are especially mentioned because what they and the Franciscans could not do with the incorrigible savage could not be done, and was never done, by any others. Brébœuf was one of these, and he died brave and defiant amid tortures the most hellish that could be invented by that fiendish ingenuity that has descended through all the tribes of the American Indian to this day, some forms of which the present writer has himself seen, to haunt his dreams until his dying hour. Marquette was one, dying at last on the shores of Lake Michigan, in the midst of a wilderness to whose throbbing commercial heart men now resort from every land. But even the Jesuits did not succeed, much less the Protestants, some of whom used, in not unnatural indignation, to say that the way to change the savages was to cut their throats; merely an ancient version of the apothegm of General Sheridan. They caught young Indians and sent them to England for training, and “they only learned the vices of the English.” A college was founded in Virginia, and ten thousand acres of land given it. The principal of the institution was killed, and the very germ exterminated. The students of every other school invariably relapsed into savagery just as they do now. The utmost zeal went unrequited; the most conscientious labors were without avail, and in certain private letters 208 which have been spared it is found that the missionaries sometimes spoke what they thought of the Indians of that day, and their sentiments do not greatly vary from the atrocious opinions of the nonphilanthropist of the border at the present time. John Eliot, the “Apostle to the Indians,” is the pride and praise of New England Protestantism, and one whose greatness as a Christian and a man can hardly be overestimated. In robe and crown he doubtless stands now with his opposites in life; with Brébœuf and Marquette and Jogues; in the shining ranks that guard the battlements of heaven, and in the service of Him who measures not by any human standard of creed or of success. He translated the whole Bible into a dialect spoken by only a few thousand people, and thought it worth while, and it remained a few years afterwards an indecipherable curiosity which had never been used, and almost all his efforts were in the end quite as useless. The piety of his Indian converts began and ended at a very low mark on the scale of right living. His most trying experience was

the moral instability of his people. His educational schemes all failed, his only Indian college graduate died at twenty years of age, and others, after conversion, engaged in Philip's massacres, among them the very man who, as the only Indian printer that ever lived, had helped him to issue his famous Bible. And finally the remaining converts to the faithful work of all these great and good men, though Christians only after a modified Indian standard of piety, proceeded to die. Alike in New England and California, the virtues of the white man, his 209 pieties, morals and beliefs have been as fatal to the Indian as his vices. John Brainerd, another veteran Indian Missionary, was constrained to say at the last: "There is too much truth in the common saying, 'Indians will be Indians.' " It may be much to say, and shocking to the reader, but the great mass of testimony which must be elicited upon any careful examination of the history of the beings whom we call Indians, will show them changeless in a character for which the word "awful" is only slightly descriptive; going steadily down to extinction and oblivion unchanged by any power, human or divine; with the forms and many of the acutest sensibilities and passions of men, yet in all their history incorrigible as the hyena whom the cage never tames.

#### INDIAN TYPES:—APACHE CHILDREN.

But since the whole early history of missions on the Atlantic coast is written in blood, and that of the Pacific is margined only by the marks of submissive stupidity and final decay, and both belong largely to the same period, some curiosity is excited upon the question of the difference, and why? Serra and his companions went to meet death if necessary, and were willing to meet it, and it was intended that this beautiful solitude should be consecrated by the blood of martyrs if it should be the will of God. Instead, 210 they met with both a success and peace hitherto and since unknown in all the annals of the faith. In thirty years or less their converts had become their servants, and they themselves were no longer self-denying missionaries, suffering in the cause, but *hacendados* wearing an ecclesiastical uniform, and managing vast and productive estates with a commercial acumen and an agricultural knowledge never before so compactly stowed beneath shaven crowns. Success was so great that zeal was disarmed, monastic vows were forgotten, prayer and faith became merely forms. The causes of so unwonted a victory over Satan among the gentiles might have been searched for in that realm of miracles which in those days constituted a close

environment of the holy life and the monk's cell, had it not lain still more plainly in view in the character of the gentiles themselves, and it is not a new inquiry which asks after the personality of the first man who, for historical purposes, may be called a Californian.

Temescals; Guenocks, Tulkays, Socollomillos, Sueconies, Pulpones, Tolores, Ullillates, Matalanes, Salsos, Quirotes, Ahwashtes, Ahltomes, Tulomos, Romenores—all the barbaric designations of tribes the savage tongue could twist, represented one general character with differences only important to themselves, and that general character is expressed by the term by which the Americans called them when they came and found their successors;—plain “Digger.” This has until date passed for the general term applying to all that was aboriginal in California. It conveniently expressed contempt and described a mode of life at the same time, and at a period when, in regard to both Indians and Americans, it was not the custom to inquire too closely after particulars and antecedents.

The tribes were so numerous at the advent of the Franciscans that a new one was discovered, and often two or three, with every day's journey. They all spoke different languages, and each occupied its own territory. No attempt at any confederacy had apparently ever been made, and there was not even a crude and incoherent form of government for each separate tribe. Every soul in their country did as seemed unto him best, and yet never did those things which some rule or regulation or some other tribe of Indians, or some tradition, thought he ought not to do. There was among them all no form of worship, and probably not any idea or theory of religion. Bancroft says: “The Mission Fathers found a virgin field, whereon neither God nor devil was worshipped.”

None of them worked, and they knew no form of industry. Even in such a land as South California they were not tillers of the soil. The spoils of their chase were gophers, rabbits, sometimes snakes, lizards, bugs, mice, grasshoppers. Roots they ate, digging for them with their fingers and nails. They caught fish on the coast, but had few or no boats, and used only that bundle of reeds called a “*balsa*,” still to be found among their wild descendants on the upper waters of the Gulf of California. They were sometimes armed with that universal and effective weapon of all ages and times, the bow and arrow, but with them it had its weakest form, and often was absent entirely. Their 212

habitations were such that the house of a beaver or the nest of an oriole were wonders beside them; rude and temporary shelters against the sun only; holes in the ground; burrows; dens; and most frequently they had none at all. Their clothing scandalized the Padres by an ostentatious absence of any at all in the case of the men, and by only some “twisted strings in front, and the skin of an animal behind,” in the middle of the body in women. Sometimes they fended against the cold, such as there was, with a garment of mud from head to foot, and by the time it dried and cracked and fell off, it was warm again. From the North to the South, the further one traveled the lower and more degraded he found the Indians. Those whom the Franciscans converted and utilized were, save that they were of divers tribes and tongues, all of a kind, yet of so many kinds that details are conflicting. There was an infinite diversity of tribal names. Sometimes one tribe had three or four names, sometimes, apparently, none at all. Often they had a designation for themselves, while all outsiders took the liberty of calling them by another and different one. Occasionally they earned for themselves the reputation of being most prodigious and unnecessary liars by calling themselves by one name among themselves, and by another among strangers. Every two or three leagues of the early missionary wanderings would show a new cluster of huts, or booths, or holes, inhabited by a new tribe with a distinct language, and the people of these “*rancherías*” were accustomed not to interfere with, or even to casually know, each other. Near where 213 now stands Santa Barbara there was a place known as Dos Pueblos, “two towns,” where a little *estero*, or sea-swamp, lay between, and the inhabitants of the one village considered the inhabitants of the other to be foreigners, and the *esters* was an impassable barrier. At the mission of San Carlos de Monterey there were eleven different languages spoken by the converts, and at San Francisco nineteen. The Indians of San Luis Rey de Francia and their near neighbors of San Juan Capistrano, were totally different, and those of them that are left remain so, and yet all the tribes and kindreds came under the general designation of “Diggers” from an universal shiftlessness which made them akin.

#### INDIAN TYPES:—PUEBLO SCHOOL-GIRL.

On other details the sparse chroniclers who deign to mention them greatly differ. One speaks of people “of an olive color, very light, with rather comely women.” Another tells of “broad-faced squaws of almost African blackness.” To this day one observer of old California will say that the

Indians he has seen are very black, while another will think those of his acquaintance rather fair. There are in mission annals no stories of any great lewdness of custom or life, but Powers, a writer in the *Overland Monthly*, has said that all their unmarried women were common property. Thus, while the general life of the 214 original Californian might be fairly included under one description if it was bad enough, totally different impressions might be produced if the history was only that of a single tribe. The rule was at one time accepted that all deteriorated as they lived nearer the coast, those in the northern interior being said to be "very superior, and approaching more nearly to the races of the plains," which, if they did, leads one to the conclusion that the idea of superiority is also a merely relative one. No rule seems to have held in the matter of locality. To this day one tribe is somewhat superior to another, or the reverse, quite regardless of habitat or visible cause, while the despairing axiom that "Indians will be Indians" holds good with all. Ethnology comes forward with her reverend verdict and declares that in all probability the Californians were of a different stock from all other aborigines of the continent, and describes them cheerfully, thus: Complexion, darker than copper-color, nearly black; low, retreating foreheads; black and deep-set eyes; square cheek-bones; thick lips; very white teeth; long, coarse, black, bushy and abundant hair; very little beard, with exceptions to the rule; nose of the African type; figure of medium height and physical development average. The incompatibility of this general figure with a personal docility which is beyond dispute, ethnology does not attempt to account for, and the curious "gentile" the Padres found and converted remains very much a puzzle in all except his passing away from among the denizens of earth.

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Almost naked, with only a strip of something round the waist, or dressed as Palou describes them; wanting no house save a shelter from the sun in summer and a hole in the ground in winter; knowing no law but lax custom, and almost without even the time-honored tribal magnates known as "chiefs;" they found sustenance in the offal and droppings of nature, and knew but two industries: the plaiting of *tule* or rushes, and the preparation of acorns as the only standard food they knew. The first they made aprons and built shelters of, the last was an acrid staple of the tribal larder which nobody seems to have eaten since. One of the troubles of the Padres with them was that

they would not wear clothes, discarding them and mis-wearing them the moment they were out of sight. They had no “pots and kettles” of any kind, and the Monos and other tribes, whose remnants still linger, do not have or need them now. The interior agriculturist, who at “killing time” heats water in a barrel by putting hot stones in it, unconsciously imitates the earliest cookery known to humanity. The vessel was a water-tight basket in which water was made to boil and the acorns to cook by a continual putting in and taking out of heated stones. The *metate*; the mill upon which the Mexican woman grinds away her life in making *tortillas*; is the savage invention upon which these boiled acorns were made into meal. Then they scooped out a hole in the running stream and set the basket of meal there until what we would call the tannin was washed out, boiled it again to make “mush,” and ate it. Nearly every acorn had a 216 worm in it, and it was counted a good year when such was the case. California is not a country very plentiful in grasshoppers, but such as there were in those times were made the most of. They dug a ditch, and formed a line of young and old, and encircled the insects and drove them into it. Their only provision for the gloomy season when grasshoppers were not, was to string them on a filament torn off of a yucca-leaf, like beads, and dry them. There were lizards and “horned toads” in plenty, and occasional snakes, only two varieties of which are poisonous. All these were so much food to the gentle aborigines. When one now sees the grotesque bird called a “sage-hen,” or “road-runner,” skurrying across the dusty highway with the yellow belly of a horned toad gleaming crosswise in his beak, he can not but think of the hilarious avidity with which, under the same circumstances, both would have been chased by the early Californian. When in these times you visit Yo Semite, walled with the colossal magnificences that make your inner consciousness throb whenever you think about them afterwards, and which teach you then and there that you have a soul, you may remember that it was an ancient fastness of the Californian, discovered first by white men who chased him thither. The aborigines did not go there for scenery; it was a famous place for acorns, and, perhaps, grasshoppers. There is no legend or tradition to indicate that he ever looked up, up into the blue beyond the immeasurable heights with any quickening of his sordid heart, with any new-born dream or idea of the possibilities of a 217 hereafter in which even the grandeurs Yo Semite must sink into insignificance.

And, withal, the Californian was semi-herbivorous. He preferred of all diet the blossoming clover of the country, or what was called clover from its similarity to that familiar fodder of civilization. Omnivorousness would therefore seem to be one of the original traits of humanity, and a freak not originating with Belshazzar. These Indians are declared to have grazed in the herbage on all-fours like swine or cattle, and like them to have grown fat upon the diet.

#### INDIAN TYPES:—YUMA CHILDREN.

Like their kinsmen, the Yumas and Mojaves of the present, they had great skill in the making of baskets. That which is to civilization almost an impossibility, the weaving of a vessel of grass or fibre which is water-tight, was to them easy. They could also, in common with all other savages, chip arrowheads out of flint or obsidian, and grind shell beads and drill them. The greatest skill in these industries existed before the missionaries came, and is found in the contents of graves made many a year before. As in other regions, there are in these and similar finds strong indications that as the unnoted ages have passed they have seen successive tribes and kindreds come and pass away, each one without a record, a monument, or a line of history. The last of the shadowy procession has now gone by, leaving only the impression that the story of the human race has never been written, but that even as guessed upon and imagined, it is the saddest story the silent æons know.

These people had one unimportant characteristic which seems an index to the gentleness with which they welcomed the Spaniards. They loved flowers. The Padres found them garlanded and smiling beneath the very bloom which is the glory of their lost country to this day. Perhaps the idea is not new, but if the reader will recall his facts from the general history of missions, he will find that wherever this redeeming trait has existed among savages there has been proportionately less difficulty in persuading them to adopt the only faith which teaches that love redeems. The converse is so nearly true that redemption from the natural heathenism which loves blood and not bloom is rare, individual, and an exception. But they also loved paint. What are now the New Almaden cinnabar mines were in the old times the scene and cause of much of the tribal strife. They wanted vermilion to make themselves pleasing withal, and were willing to fight for it. But while, in

these days, the love of paint has gone, that for flowers remains. One can not always know whether the California cottage belongs to a Spaniard, 219 or an Indian or a Mestizo, but there are always flowers there.

This Mestizo, meaning a mixed one, a half-breed, is not a curiosity, and not at all discreditable to his ancestors on either side. The Spanish mission-soldier was a womanless man, and he took this flower-loving heathenness to wife. Panza was a good fellow in a way, and the Roman faith knows no divorce. One of the very strongest means of grace at the disposal of the Padres was the sacrament of marriage. When one sees the Mestizo now he reflects upon the curious mingling there of two histories, and the days they recall, and this same man or woman is perhaps the most pathetic creature in the California of to-day, for they represent to the observer something they are not conscious of themselves. Child of *conquistador* and of bug-eater, there is a story on either side which, separately considered, seem too far apart to ever be embodied in a single individual.

There is something so barbarously unique in the clouded and doubtful story of the original Californian, much that is so contradictory, that the genuineness of the best attested facts about him has been doubted or denied. Almost all travelers have unhesitatingly placed him in the very lowest notch of the scale of humanity, yet against every superficial reason why he should be so. There is no fairer land than California, but the argument that this fact has any tendency to produce better grades of humanity seems fallacious. Here was a man who tilled no ground, yet was anti-nomadic in the strictest sense, so that each little tribe became an amusing and 220 ridiculous parody upon the national idea. He was idle because the fertility of his native land rendered toil unnecessary, and clothed and warmed and fed him. Because of idleness he was not a fighter, for ambition and laziness do not go together. Even in the aridness of Arizona do we find the remains of past civilizations, and the fever-haunted swamps of Darien are the burial-places of vast cities. Further northward has in all time raged the fierceness of tribal warfare, and lived the thirst of glory and conquest. Only in the golden mean of California do we find, simple, amiable, sordid, idle, not races of hunters and wanderers, but whole tribes of those who live upon roots and herbs and insects, who sleep in the sun, who burrow, who have no God and no devil, no law and no rights, who garlanded their heads with flowers, and who yielded to the first touch of the invader, and readily

and easily became his converts and his servants. Heaven or hell or angel they had not, and took what was given them. Possessing themselves no theory of origin or destiny or fate, they presented no arguments against that which was brought to them. "Tillage and fixed dwellings must precede the advent of a new religion and a new code of law." So Eliot found, and the Franciscans gave both these to the Californians as a preliminary. Eliot's Indians wished to know why God did not kill the devil and have done with him, and it is not known what answer the apostle made to this unexpected and logical irruption of the *bete noir* of theology, but these California amiables never thought of that heroic remedy for all human sin and sorrow.

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And now, after a brief seventy years, came the inevitable end. Everything the Indian had or knew had been abolished suddenly. The routine of his aimless life, the want of custom of his race, was utterly changed. Infinitely more than he had ever had before was given him if he would only work, and hell was made apparent to him if he would not, and he therefore worked and was given to. Care was taken of him. He was not required to think; woe be unto his immortal part if he did. There came into his savage life a long roll of new wants and new fears. He learned the taste of beef, and thereafter the lizard escaped. The pulpy mission grape dwelt long upon his palate, and the herbs went ungathered and the roots undigged. When he wanted any of these new things he asked and was told how he might acquire them: not by manufacture or the knowledge of any process, but at the hands of those fathers of good, the Padres. Every Sunday he got them, even without asking, if he had been good.

#### BABY AND CRADLE.

More than two generations passed, and then the Californian had practically forgotten how his fathers had lived. New wants had been invented and new habits formed. The old would not do, and the new he could not furnish for himself unaided. He was a child, needing every day advice, direction and care. His barbarian independence was gone, but he had not 222 acquired the secrets of civilization. Here and there wandered the sandaled monks, directing, correcting, controlling, governing, as fathers among children, enforcing the law of conscience, administering the rule

of right, always respected as the dispensers of a wisdom supernatural to untutored minds, and as the doers of a justice between man and man that even children might perfectly understand. Among all questionings and doubts upon whatsoever points, it has never been alleged that the Franciscan friars were not beloved of their people. The great Church they served unbends among the lowly, and becomes the Church of whatever tribe or race once admits its messengers. And these messengers, Franciscan or Jesuit, without homes or wives or loves, consecrated in a truer sense than Protestantism can know to the work upon which they have been sent, live and die content among those to whom they have once borne that imperative message which they have not failed to deliver even through flame and torture.

Then came that time, heart-breaking, we may guess, which is expressed by the saddest word in the vocabulary of that California that was, and that will never again be. Sequestration, long dreaded and long averted, came at last in the form of law. It was, in a political and economical sense, right. The Mexican government merely carried out the intention of the ancient and decaying power whose successor it was, and no government, however wedded to that ancient idea of the union of Church and State the fallacy of which was first perceived by the framers of the American constitution, could long endure that a whole province should practically be administered by the Church alone. The ten years originally agreed upon had been prolonged to seven times ten. The turn of the State was long overdue. Sequestration meant the reversion of the lands until then used, but never owned by the missions, to the commonwealth, the making of the mission churches into parish churches, of the mission settlements into pueblos; "towns," and of the Indians into citizens. It was, and has always been, and will ever be, contrary to the internal and enduring idea of the Church herself, but, as in Mexico and Italy in still later times, and in laws for which the South California sequestration was but a shadow, she will find herself continually opposed by those kingdoms of the earth which have not yet entirely become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His righteousness.

#### MOJAVE GIRL.

Yet was sequestration in California based upon a primal error so serious that it almost obliterates the wonderful story of the missions, and gives us pause as to why they should have ever been. This

error consisted in the supposition that in the Indian dwelt the capacity for becoming a citizen. The law of sequestration was the decree of his orphanage. Cast again upon the world which had once been his home, all his new wants aggravating the misery of a savage life, unable longer to avail himself of the advantages 224

#### WHAT THE MISSIONARIES LEFT.

225 of the life of either savage or citizen, he died, and continues to die, until, of all the swarthy hosts that watched from their hills the coming of the crossbearers, scarce enough are left to furnish ethnology a clue. The ready victim of disease, and the predestined of extermination, small-pox alone has laid them by hundreds in unknown graves. The few instances of reversion to almost absolute savagery have been the only exceptions to that ancient rule which has worked with as perfect a certainty as any rule applied to human nature ever can, and which embodies an awful alternative. Convert the American savage; even change his life by the preliminaries and preparations without actually converting him; and you kill him. Leave him alone, and you also leave unchanged the fiat which dooms his soul.

Sequestration ended the days of the most perfect form of the Kingdom of Righteousness, at least from a churchman's view-point, which, so far, it has been permitted to the world to see since Saul, the son of Kish, became the heir of the Hebrew theocracy. The Franciscans must have had their natural and human view of the situation. They saw blasted not only the present situation, but future hopes. One by one, or by twos and threes, they went away never to return. Following the act, and between it and the deed, came all the proverbial evils of Spanish administration. To go, and go quickly, was the end of the prayers and toils and hopes of Fray Junipero Serra.

There is a reason, perhaps, embodied in these few weeks or months of final waiting, why mission life is a blank as to all the details which go to make up a 226 picture. If there are diaries, journals, personal narratives, hints, descriptions, they are lost. It was not the intention that they should be preserved. Perhaps every cowed brother of them, sinking again into the brown ranks of his order, leaving his soul's children to wander and starve after a fatherhood that had become traditional, abandoning forever the fair land that had witnessed the peaceful triumph of his faith, wished in

his heart that the California missions had never been. He said: "Even so does man work, and with God is the result. Let us go." Then came the secular parish priests, without flocks almost from the beginning of their pastorates, and amid silence, isolation and quick decay, an unholy miracle of disappearance seems to have been wrought whereby the precious vessels of the sanctuary, the sacred jewelry which showed the exquisite handiwork of the past, the vessels of the temple, were coined into sordid half-dollars. The reign of neglect and decay which continues yet then began, until now, in this good year 1889, the wanderer of another race and an alien faith sees around him somewhat of that which has been imperfectly described in these pages. There is no past, yet that which we call the past cannot be recalled. Let the visitor to California remember, carelessly perhaps, yet still remember, that about him lie the ruins of that time which is the connecting link between a past so remote that about it hangs a mist which is like the purple veil of the Californian hills, and that wonderful present which even they who see may not believe in, so much is it like the 227 rubbing of the lamp, so nearly the reality of an Arabian tale.

The Original Californian, embodying the face, habits and proclivities of the earlier time, may now only be caught in glimpses and shadows. What may sometimes have become of him, and what reversion may occur in the moral status of even him who was specifically known as a "Mission Indian," is curiously illustrated by the following excerpt from a California newspaper of very recent date:

"Mr. C. L. Bacheller, United States Master in Chancery, is engaged in taking testimony in a very important case, which will be decided by the United States Circuit Court. It is the case of John Morongo and other Mission Indians as wards of the United States, against John G. North and Richard Gird, to quiet the title to 45,000 acres of land in San Bernardino county, claimed by the Indians as a part of their reservation, and by defendants under a grant to them from the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. The land in dispute is alleged by plaintiffs to be a part of the Potrero reservation and is very valuable. The witnesses for the plaintiff attract a good deal of attention, and are curiosities in themselves. Deputy United States Marshal R. J. Dominguez had a long hunt for them in the Yuma desert, where the thermometer stood 120 degrees in the shade. These witnesses, five in number, are Indians, and the youngest is 75 years and the oldest 120. The oldest man, Juan

Saberia, is supposed to be the oldest Indian alive in the United States. He was 12 years old when the old Mission San Gabriel was built, and saw it at the time. Another Indian, Juan Cahuilla, is about 115 years old. Harabisio Cabazon, the chief of the whole tribe, is 80 years old. He is the son of the old chief who died four years ago at the age of 140. Francisco Apache is 105 years old. He is said to have been given his surname when he married an Apache woman. He also says that he saw the Old Mission church when it was built. Since then he has been on the warpath several times, in Arizona. Ramon Largo, the next in age, says he is 104 years old. The Mission was built when he was born. He is another warrior and has been on the warpath several times. These specimens of aged humanity were brought here to testify to the length of time the Indians have been in possession of the lands claimed, and the defendants will have a hard time in obtaining witnesses who will go back further in their recollections. Recently they have been living in the desert under the mesquite trees on *pechete*, or the bean of the tree. They have white beards and grizzled hair and are queer looking individuals.”

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